PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Change in '05 must begin with GMA, businessmen say

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

If 2005 is a "year of urgent change," its transformation should begin with President Macapagal-Arroyo herself to ensure that key fiscal reforms are implemented and that confidence in the economy is improved, leading business leaders said yesterday.

FOREIGN 4A

ALL THINGS bright and beautiful as a New Year's day canvas this car ends blue. For sure. Blue can blow a horn to make merry, to interrupt the sounds of the season of hope. For sure. For tomorrow may not bring new beginnings, only more of the same squalor she knows only too well in the stream of the city.

World opens arms, hearts

With 140,000 deaths, worst is yet to come

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—As the death toll from the most catastrophic tsunami in recorded history marched relentlessly on, experts warned yesterday of a second wave of misery in the face of threats from deadly diseases, with children especially vulnerable.

With the death count likely to surpass the 140,000 mark, the world sped up what may be its biggest relief effort to help millions of tsunami survivors desperate for food, shelter and clean water.

Sri Lanka said more than 28,000 people were now confirmed dead and Indonesia, which has suffered the most, said its toll was likely to pass 100,000.

"The worst is yet to come, I am afraid, because of the breakdown of sanitation facili-

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Strangers give shirts off their backs for victims

PEOPLE across the world opened their hearts and wallets to give millions of dollars to victims, jamming phone lines and telephones and outpacing their own governments in their generosity following a tsunami disaster of biblical proportions.

Besides offering cash, people came forward to donate clothes and food while reading the wounded.

The appeals for help for the tsunami victims seemed to strike a chord with donors because of the sheer scale of the disaster, the gruesome pictures on television and the holiday giving season.

In Hong Kong, actor Jackie Chan donated HK$10,000,000 ($1,284,202) to UNICEF.

The actor, star's pledge was more than matched by Li Ka-shing, Asia's richest man and head of a global commercial empire, he pledged to HK$80 million ($13.3 million).

In Thailand, the royal family—which is mourning the death in Phuket of 23-year-old Princess Srirasmi, the Thai-American grandson of King Bhumipol Adulyadej—is leading nationwide calls for help for the survivors.

The King's daughter, Princess Sirindhorn, Chakri Sirindhorn, appealed for more people to visit blood donation centers. And not only Thais heeded the call. In Chiang Mai, foreign tourists queued up to give blood at a Red Cross center.

Thais lined up in the cold in Helsinki to contribute. The country of just 5 million people quickly raised $4 million.

Italians raised $17 million by sending special text messages on their mobile phones.

"This is just such a big tragedy, so many people dead. It's just such a huge thing, and it's happened at Christmas," said Gail Miller, a London doctor, who phoned in a contribution to Britain's appeal. "There's just a feeling of powerlessness at home."

The World Bank offered $250 million in relief, bringing total international aid to nearly $500 million.

But Oxfam wants the smaller, more personal touches of humanity: families opening their homes to bewildered survivors, strangers offering the shirts off their backs to foreigners in stationwear left without lost their lives.

Dutch tourists Jeroen Kramers, feared to five empty handed as her hotel room in Galle in southern Sri Lanka filled with water, was touched by the gen-

WORLD 4A

It's year of the rooster, but it could well be gay

By Blandine S. Rivera

Buenos Aires disco fire kills 169 revelers

BUENOS AIRES—Reminiscent of the Ozone disco tragedy in the Philippines, a blaze in a Buenos Aires nightclub packed with young revelers celebrating the New Year holidays killed at least 169 people and injured 93%, in a stampeding crowd was trapped by locked exit doors, officials said on Friday.

The blaze is thought to have been caused by a flare fired inside the club's ceiling during a rock concert, sending burning debris into the crowd of up to 4,000 people who desperately

FOREIGN 4A

Ivy Catherine wanted to be home for Christmas

By TJ Burgonio

ABU BAKRY wanted to spend her Christmas in Phuket but, in the end, she yielded to the wishes of her Japanese husband.

That was what Sumire Tomioka-Sayid and yesterday after confirmation came that the body of a woman found inside a wrecked vehicle near the Thai beach swamped by tsunami was that of her sister, Ivy Catherine Tomioka Estrada.

Ivy Catherine, 32, an alumna of the University of the Philippines, and Emilio C. Estrada, 37, an employee of the Land Bank in Makati, Pharaoh, were among at least three Filipinos confirmed to have been killed in the disaster, pic, officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

Twenty other Filipinos remained missing while 27 survived.

Among those missing were Ivy's Japanese husband Masahiro Terasaka, 39; sons Mahiro, 9, and Yukihiro, 6, and daughter Miyuna, 3 months old.

The DFA earlier confirmed the death of Shaheen Mae Ang Tan, 19, an Ateneo de Manila University student.

"My sister Ivy got involved with her husband because he

NATION 1A

Estrada after the knife: New year, new knees

By Armand N. Nocum

HONG KONG—A Hong Kong physician successfully operated on former Philippine President Joseph Estrada's knees yesterday to correct the surgery, a spokesperson said.

Estrada appeared to be recuperating well from the four-hour procedure on his knees, which suffered from osteoarthritis, said the spokesperson, Dolores Ocampo-Gallen.

"He's still inside the operating room, but we were informed the operation is over. It was successful," the spokesperson said.

The team of surgeons was led by Hong Kong-based Dr. Julian Chung Yiu-ki. Julia Chung is neither a general.

According to Lucy Gonzon, Estrada's Manila doctor, the former President would regain consciousness at the end of the operation that he said would last fifteen to four hours.

But he could does let semi-conscious and could be asleep during the passing of the year, Gonzon said.

Estrada will be kept under watch for 24 hours in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit. Only his relatives will be allowed to visit him.

But let yesterday, an apprehensive Estrada managed to joke around with reporters from the Philippines who had joined the search at the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital.

"I might not wake up from my slumber," he said in Filipino.

"Now, you, cute bitches," he said of the operation that would have him walking better and standing nearly 6 ft tall. The titanium replacement will add more than two inches to the 5' 8 1/2" tall Estrada.

Estrada admitted to reporters that he was apprehensive about the operation, having seen an inhuman number of problematic knees that are replaced during such procedures.

EXTRA 1A

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

[illegible]

Second FRONTPAGE

7 killed as fire hits firecracker stalls in Bocaue

By Carmela Reyes
Philippine Center Desk

BOCAUE, Bulacan—The year 2004 for this town, considered the country's firecracker capital, literally ended with a bang after a fire and a series of explosions hit a strip of firecracker stalls in Barangay Turo yesterday morning, killing at least seven people.

The victims were between 9 and 38 years old. Most of them were relatives of caretakers of the stalls that were operating for 24 hours in the past few days to accommodate customers rushing to buy firecrackers for the New Year's Eve revelry.

Supt. Arthur Ogerio, Bulacan fire marshal, said the more than two-hour fire broke out at about 8 a.m. at the King Bomb'S Fireworks along Gov. F. Halili Avenue, near the boundary of the North Luzon Expressway.

Ogerio said the fire spread to 14 other stalls, or how four makeshift firework structures and at least three houses in the area.

Explosions

Explosions were heard as the blaze ate up firecrackers and pyrotechnic products displayed at the stalls, investigators said.

Senior Supt. Benedict Michael Rabin, Bulacan police director, identified the victims as siblings Jowad, 12; Mutmal Jk, 11; Rizh Kevin, 9; and Rhiy Alex, 11, all residents of Arco; and Danilo Nicanor, 38; Hermelo Aldaba, 22; and Antonio Bordas, 11.

The four siblings were children of Mutmal Jusoy II, who manages the King Kenneth Fireworks. Police said the stall owner, Elenita Pano of Barangay Turo, is a licensed dealer of firecrackers and pyrotechnic products in the town.

The police have yet to determine if Hermie, Alabastro and Nicolas were buyers or children of customers or owners of the other firecracker stalls razed by fire.

Relatives of the victims said the fire spread rapidly and prevented the victims from going out of the stalls immediately.

Defective product

Councilor Aldrin Sta. Ana, who oversees stalls in the area, said the fire was caused by a defective product called "Tomboy Jr," that King Kenneth employees tested on the request of a customer.

Sparks from the product caused the firecrackers displayed in the area, Sta. Ana said.

Ogerio said the fire, which was put out at past 8:30 a.m., destroyed at least P2 million worth of property and products.

At least six motorcycles and a car parked in front of the stalls were burned, he said.

Reijadi Urbiola, president of the Philippine Pyrotechnics Manufacturers and Dealers Association Inc., said the Friday fire was the seventh incident involving firecracker stalls and factories in Bulacan this year.

In September, two workers were killed when a firecracker factory exploded in Sta. Maria town.

WHAT remains of a vehicle burned during the two-hour fire.

STILL a caretaker May Makeotro checks for the bodies of his relatives.

No let-up in destab efforts vs Arroyo, says DOJ

By Philip C. Tubeza

OPPOSITION groups are intensifying destabilization efforts against the government as the "recurring" members of the military in Lanao del Sur, Defense Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the other day.

Gonzalez said destabilization efforts were continuing even though an alleged plot to use the funeral of actor Fernando Poe Jr. on Dec. 22 to spark an uprising fizzled out.

"The resuming of the military continues. There will always be adventurists given our [political] climate," he said.

Gonzalez did not identify the destabilizers, however, but said that intelligence agencies continued to monitor their movements.

Steadfast

"We are trying to monitor their efforts. But as far as Jun as far as I'm concerned, they have not succeeded. The military has remained steadfast," he said.

Gonzalez had earlier said the destabilizers planned to remove President Macapagal-Arroyo from power by July 25. Failing that, they would try again by May 1 or Labor Day he said.

Gonzalez said he could not know if the timetable still held.

Earlier, he had also said that members of ousted President Joseph Estrada's Cabinet, his supporters, as well as Poe's supporters, were among the plotters. After Estrada left the sorrowful funeral services for Poe, Gonzalez said, some "traditional" leaders were distributed in the church.

The alleged plot involved opposition supporters who were in a replay of the past two Edsa uprisings and a general mutinying the military's withdrawal of support from the administration.

Junta plan

Gonzalez said the plotters planned to replace President Arroyo with a seven-man junta chaired by a "popular television personality."

The military had named Col. Jose Santos, reportedly a Poe supporter, for questioning about the destabilization plan.

Gonzalez, a 1970-up admirer of the Philippine Military Academy, was last assigned to the 9th Infantry Brigade based in Ilocos.

During the last election campaign, he was reportedly quoted in Manila and other Mindanao provinces as saying he had been previously assigned campaigning for Poe in violation of military regulations.

Another officer, Lt. Col. Gracelino Maquilo, escaped house arrest custody custody last Dec. 15, the eve of Poe's funeral. He was given up yesterday to surrender.

Maquilo had been restricted to quarters since Nov. 9 after he complained about what he called the bloated promotion system in the military.

Opposition groups allegedly contacted him to join the plot to oust the Arroyo after he was not promoted.

NO RESPITE FROM TERROR

Members of the PNP-Aviation Security Group simulate a counter-attack on a "hijacked" aircraft at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday, as part of continuing antiterror preparedness measures announced by the Makapaligal-managed for security services.

Aglipay heeds junior officers, sacks anti-kidnap unit chief

By Christian V. Esguerra

YIELDING to griping junior officers, Philippine National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay has sacked a top police official as head of the PNP's anti-kidnapping unit.

Aglipay asked Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza to concentrate instead on the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of which he is also officer in charge.

PNP intelligence director Rolen Delfin was designated as supervisor of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer) team replacement for Mendoza.

"He's totally out of Pacer," said Aglipay of Mendoza in a press conference yesterday.

Mendoza's appointment as Pacer chief almost a week before Christmas was met by the departure of at least 52 policemen from the PNP's prime anti-kidnapping group.

Apparently, not wanting to serve under Mendoza, the officers asked to be transferred to the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force headed by former Secretary Angelo Reyes.

Aglipay yesterday tempered the controversy over the policemen's departure, saying they had simply "requested" to be loaned to the anti-smuggling task force.

He said he turned down the request and assigned to NAST in casual policemen who had just retired from a mission in Kosovo.

"There were no resignations," Aglipay told reporters.

He said Mendoza had asked to give up the much-sought after Pacer post in order to be formally took over as CIDG chief in charge over Christmas Eve.

But he clarified that Mendoza's appointment as CIDG head was only temporary.

He acknowledged the issue raised by senior PNP officials that Mendoza was "too junior" for the CIDG post, a position that requires a two-star general or director.

Dave Aglipay finds a permanent replacement for crowded CIDG director Reynaldo Lomibao. Mendoza might be named back to his previous position as CIDG deputy.

DOLE: Jobs given to over 672,000

A TOTAL of 672,351 people have been given jobs in the first 10 months of last year by the public employment service offices (PESO) of the Department of Labor and Employment.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas yesterday reported that on top of regular job seekers, disadvantaged persons were also assisted and aimed in jobs by the nationwide PESO network.

They included poor students, out-of-school youth, persons with disabilities, returning overseas Filipino workers, displaced workers, migratory workers and ex-convicts.

In his report, the department said the PESO placed job seekers from January to October 2004 as follows: [illegible] employments—584,439; overseas employments—12,722; self-employment—35,040; and training—39,985. [illegible] during

Don't lose hope for a better year, say bishops

By Blanche S. Rivera

DAVAO: Church leaders yesterday urged Filipinos not to let their hope for a better year be swept away by the calamities that struck the Philippines and South Asia this past year.

In its New Year's message, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines hailed the Filipino families' resilience and ability to remain optimistic despite past tragedies.

"While disasters and calamities struck cynical and pessimistic eyes... our families look at it, as Christians have been doing for centuries, with a hope that is not quenched by mutual forces of violence and evil," CBCP president Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla said.

"It is a hope which as a spiritual power, encourages our families to participate in the building of a just, humane, and peaceful country even doing to God's plan," he said.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales said the Filipinos' faith would teach them to trust in God's goodness even in their greatest losses.

"Let us not lose hope for the coming moment of God is not with—for the recent local and continental calamities of unscrupulous nature only remind us of the fragility of life, of nature, and of the limitations that we are in all senses," Rosales said in a separate New Year's message.

"Reverence and piety in its use is part of the stewardship we accept from God when we receive life and profit from nature's gifts," he said.

Rosales, an advocate of environmental preservation, appealed to Filipinos to become more responsible stewards of nature this year, having experienced the destructive wrought by the maltreatment of God's creation.

CHILDREN in Malabon welcome the New Year with sparklers, the color alternates to fine tuckers with seasonally chalk up a huge toll in deaths, injuries and destruction.

METRO
Editor Ester G. Diposoglio Assistant Editor Conon B. Vibo

EZ2 18 38 SUERTRES 4 4 2 (for exact order) FOUR DIGIT 5 6 2 5 MEGALOTTO 6/45 7 14 15 18 35 44 SWEEPSTAKES 1 6 5 6 5 6

New life awaits Mandaluyong's fire victims

By Luige A. del Puerto and Ruth L. Navarro

IT WAS probably the blackest day of their lives.

But the victims of a recent fire in Mandaluyong City would like to forget, at least momentarily, that unfortunate day when a big fire ate up their homes, and look forward to the New Year with their stomachs full and with something more than hope in their pockets.

Mayor Reginald "Bayani" Tiamzon III distributed on Thursday almost some P1.3 million in cash to 600 families of Barangka Drive whose homes were razed by a fire last Sunday.

"A New Year can mean a little something to start the New Year with," Gonzales told the beneficiaries.

Each "structure owner" received P7,000, the "renter," P5,000 and the "sharer," P2,000. A bag of groceries and kitchen utensils worth P1,000 were also distributed to each family, Gonzales said.

Earlier, the mayor assured the displaced families, who had taken shelter for the time being at the Pedro E Gran Elementary School, that they would be allowed to rebuild their houses in the area. He said that the families had refused to leave their gutted house to, fearing they would not be allowed to erect new structures.

"They will be allowed to rebuild their homes," the mayor said, adding there was no such choice.

On the other hand, the families would be more off living on the streets. On the other hand, it would be too expensive for the city to relocate them, Gonzales said.

The city has since started cordoning the evacuees' food.

"Classes will start on January 3, so they cannot continue staying in the school," he said.

The fire victims were relocated out of the evacuation center yesterday.

For the remainder, the city allowed them to occupy and build houses in Sitio Kawayanan (Kaka and Kayamanggi) Ilaya. They must, however, sign a waiver that they would leave without a fuss as soon as the lot area is cleared.

The city has confirmed off the government-owned land to make sure that the people who would return are the same people who occupied it before.

"Police your own ranks," Gonzales told the victims on Thursday when he met them for the first time since the fire. The mayor had been out of the country when the fire occurred.

Before the fire, the city had proposed the division of the government land in Barangays Barangka Drive and Barangka Ilaya among 97 families.

"The proposal is no longer applicable because the minimum had increased to 150," Gonzales said. He revealed that the city's priority is the "structure owners" or the victims who owned the houses. Renters and sharers will have to settle their claims with the owners.

"We want to make sure that parts of Aguado Street shall never be occupied again," he said. "We want to keep it open for fire trucks to pass through in case of fires."

GINGERBREAD Santas serve people from all ages and classes in its quaint shops teeming with charms and ornaments said to bring good fortune in the Year of the Rooster. AP PHOTO

Shoppers find power charms in fabled street of good luck

By Tarra F. Quismundo

KEEPING off to take home a good luck charm before the world ushered a year ofthe rooster, shoppers yesterday flocked to Ongpin Street in Manila, a commercial strip known not only for its good food but also for its promise of good fortune in all shapes and sizes in the Year of the Rooster.

Believers in the Chinese tradition that luck is brought by figurines, ribbons, coins, calendars, crystals and other items that double as ornaments, shoppers hopped from shop to shop searching for the lucky deals.

"Three days before Christmas, many people have been coming to buy lucky charms. Our sales have certainly increased even after Christmas," said Cristina Tan, who owns a shop selling traditional Chinese ornaments such as intricately painted vases, golden Buddhas, and good luck charms.

In her Ongpin shop, people drop by to ask for the best item to attract luck in 2005. Open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., her family's 50-year-old shop has reported brisk sales in rooster figurines and other lucky charms such as money trees, gold Chinese coins assembled into a good luck pineapple, and calendars.

Her figurines sell from P150 to P800, based on the make, color and design. The bigger ones are priced in the thousands of pesos.

"The customers tell us what they want to buy based on what they had seen in TV shows on good fortune," said Tan.

All-time favorite

Other times, she said, she would give recommendations based on her knowledge of feng shui, the ancient Chinese belief showing how the arrangement of space, furniture and décor in a house, office or building could influence the luck or fortune of its occupants.

An all-time favorite, said Tan, is the money tree. Inside the "pot" where the tree stands, eight coins must be placed and should not be touched throughout the entire year, she said.

"The coins must be washed first with soap and water to remove the negative energy because they had been passed on from one person to another," shares Tan.

Staunch believer

But one client no longer needs advice on what to purchase, being a staunch believer in feng shui himself.

"I am hoping everything that may bring good luck, like the lucky frog, horse, dragon, rooster, crystals and other lucky charms," said Lou Antonio, an architect currently redecorating his own house in Alabang.

Antonio said his wife drove all the way to the crowded streets of Binondo for good luck finds, with a budget of P10,000.

"We can only display nine pieces of each kind of lucky charm, otherwise it would be too much," said the architect.

Many of the designs of his dining/ homes had been based on feng shui practices as explained by the owners, Antonio said.

Parole asked for 257 inmates

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A SECOND chance in life awaits 257 inmates of the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP), many of them old and ailing, who were recommended for parole yesterday by Bureau of Corrections Director Oscar G. Obanza.

"Around 200 of these inmates are 70 years old and above, and 57 have been classified as terminally ill," Obanza said.

Among those recommended for parole were 46 inmates with advanced tuberculosis, and others who had been diagnosed for chronic renal failure with anemia, asthma, hypertension, epilepsy, leprosy, cirrhosis of the liver, and diabetes.

Humanitarian reasons

In a letter to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Victoria asked that the list of inmates be granted executive clemency for humanitarian reasons. The NBP chief also admitted that the move was also an effort to decongest the prisons.

A list obtained by Inquirer showed that the oldest inmate recommended for parole was Ernesto Marcos Ramiro, 88, who had been sentenced in life for two counts of statutory rape. He had been in jail for more than four years.

The youngest, Dennis Salimeo Cabanilla, 25, was convicted for illegal discharge of firearm, alarm and scandal, and attempted homicide. An asthma patient, Cabanilla was sentenced to a maximum period of four years and had served for three years and nine months.

No danger

According to the list, more than half of the crimes committed by the inmates recommended for parole were: rape of rape and acts of lasciviousness.

"These inmates had undergone rehabilitation and no longer pose any danger to society," Obanza said, adding that the old detainees deserved to be with their family in the remaining days of their lives. He added that these inmates had already served a portion, or in some cases, more than half of their terms.

Two unique stories for 2004

ON TARGET
Rommel Ilagan

AS A JOURNALIST, I had been taught that unusual happenings make news.

So example, a man who bites a dog makes news. But if a dog bites a man, it's not news.

In my many years as a police reporter and as host of a public service radio and TV program, I've had my share of unique stories that titillate the printed or stereotypic interest of the public.

Two stories, or rather complaints, that "landed" in 2004 could make it in the Guinness Book of World Records because of their uniqueness.

The first story concerns female "Jeff" Quesada, 36, of Silay City, Negros, Bukidnon. Accused of rape, Jeff is languishing at the Bukidnon provincial jail, rape being a nonbailable offense.

But Jeff's case is outstanding as it is ridiculous.

She is a quadriplegic, meaning that his extremities—hands and feet—are paralyzed. He can't move around without any help.

Jeff's accuser is his neighbor's 16-year-old housemaid. Witnesses say she was Jeff's girlfriend.

But that's not the story. The story is how a man, who can't move without help, can allegedly would be able to rape a woman.

The girl said that Jeff poked a pistol at her, that's why she gave in to his carnal desires.

But when my staff at "Investigating" asked Jeff to try to hold a gun, he couldn't. He couldn't even hold a spoon. Jeff is not even able to go the prison toilet without being helped by a fellow detainee.

The girl claims that Jeff was able to rape her with the help of his cousin, a masseur named Jess, by holding the quadriplegic's sex organ.

My goodness gracious, that would make Jess an accomplice, but the law has not been changed.

What is surprising about the whole thing is that the prosecution, Atty. D. Gammad, filed the case in court and the judge, Maria Belen Ringpis Liban, accepted it.

The only goes to show that most lawyers and jurists rely on their memory as they cite provisions in law books, but they don't make use of their common sense.

Another case worth mentioning is the complaint of a young woman fresh from college who ate will call Dante, although that's not her real name.

Dante complained that her former best friend has been harassing her since she decided to break up with him.

The boyfriend, Randy Gaming, owner of an Internet cafe in Imus, Cavite, had an act against Dante.

During one of their Internet chats, Dante screamed, upon her boyfriend's prodding, to expose her very intimate parts to him. She even got near the computer camera and showed her private parts. All this was reportedly recorded by the boyfriend.

As Internet parlance, what the two did was cybersex.

So, when Dante broke up with her beau, the found her indiscretion exposed to the world.

The boyfriend showed everything to Internet viewers around the world. He even gave out her address and phone numbers.

Soon received hundreds of calls from libidinous men from as far as Sweden and California.

Her embarrassment was shared by her parents who would receive calls for her from some morons in the wee hours of the morning.

There's a saying that all is fair in love and war.

Now, now that Gonzales playing fair with Dante when he exposed her indiscretion to the world?

THEY LIVED to tell the harrowing tale of how they escaped death by tsunami in Phuket, Thailand. In the foreground are singer Virginia Cruz and Marites Sungit. Behind are sisters Pilar and Catherine Prieto. The latter are also entertainers.

'I thought I was dead'

By Fe Zamora

BEING swamped by a tsunami is like being sucked into a giant vacuum.

"Mukhlom ay yung dagat parang buwal. Dito dumi and ibat ibat sea was like muddy," recalled Sharon Sungit, 26, a newsman on Phi Phi Island in Phuket, one of the tourist resorts in Thailand hit by monstrous waves.

The muddied waters drowned cars and boats, sucking and sweeping Sungit about 2 km away from Charlie's Beach Resort, where he was waiting for breakfast.

"I thought I was already dead," he said.

Sungit, who had worked in Phuket for three years, suffered cuts and bruises all over his body.

"I don't even know where I got those," he said.

A thunderous sound told Filipino singer Catherine Prieto, 22, that something was coming.

"I was like doing, 'ding, ding,'" Prieto said, describing the roar of the tsunami which she said was louder than the sound of an oncoming train.

Prieto, who was also on Phi Phi at the time, said she and her sister, Pilar, were running to meet someone when she heard the strange sound.

Running for their lives

When she opened the door on the second floor of the resort staff house, Catherine saw waters gurgling on the ground floor.

"Ah wanted for the waters to subside, then we can," Catherine said.

Pilar said she and her sister were able to grab their bags containing their travel documents, including visa and personal effects. But their other belongings were lost in the rampaging waters.

Luck on their side

"I think we were lucky because the staff house was far from the shoreline," said Pilar, who arrived in Phuket with her sister in October. The Prieto sisters are from San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Sungit and his girlfriend, Virginia Cruz, and Prieto, with her younger sister Pilar, were among the five Filipinos interviewed on return from Thailand after finally evacuating aboard Phuket to the southern part of Thailand.

The four arrived via PAL at 7:55 Thursday night.

Sungit and Cruz, who had bandages on their legs and toes, were moved around on wheelchairs. The Prieto sisters were crutched and appeared to be in good spirits.

Indelible memories

With highlights on their feet, a pull-over cast and fresh bandage, the Prieto sisters looked like they were ready for their next gig.

Between 7:9 and 1:30 Filipinos are based in Phuket, working as entertainers, hotel staff and diving instructors in the world-famous island resort.

Sungit, Cruz and the Prieto, who all work as entertainers, were ecstatic to be away from the tsunami. But the sights, sounds and horrible aftermath of the storm may haunt them the rest of their lives.

"I have lost everything, all my savings, my clothes. I only have these," Sungit said, showing his two rings.

No benefits

But the four may have lost more than their clothes.

Josie Tamayo, a representative from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa), said Sungit, Cruz and the Prieto might not be eligible for benefits given to overseas workers, such as hospitalization, insurance and other welfare compensation.

Hot Owwa members

"They are not Owwa members, so we may have a problem here," Tamayo told the Inquirer.

Tamayo said the four tsunami survivors had also gone to Thailand as tourists, compounding their problems insofar as their qualifications to receive Owwa benefits are concerned.

Tamayo said the other Filipinos working in Phuket seemed to have gone there also as tourists.

FILIPINOS IN THAILAND

Missing

Here is a list of 20 Filipinos believed missing in the tsunami in Thailand, as released by the Department of Foreign Affairs:

Alexander Lanza, Mina Gibato, Marivic Ira-e, Marian Pasag, Marilyn Tan, Graciela Bulane Cruz, Kathrina Joy Lacuesta, Ma. Jane M. Icuza, Marcela S. Alian, Jasmin Buendia, Emily Rubio, Gerard E. Reyes, Jovita Gomez, and Melina Charlemagne, Ava Angela Arca, Thea Elena Montano, Chloe Ferguson, Gloria Rosario, Jay William Rosayro, Remedios Rico Garcia and Anna Ta.

Survivors

Charlie Carbajal, Jean Carbajal, Marlene Beardsley, Jenny Rose Esguerra, Mary Ann Ragasa, Theresa Joy Rivera, Rovie Bacarisas, Rachel Escobar, Jaclyn Ong S. Reyes, Antonio Ong, Jessica Catherine and Pilar Prieto, Marco Sungit, Virginia Cruz, Rosalyn Cacere Asuncion, Beverly Tan, Orlando Palermo, Cherry Pumahen, Erwin Rangas, Jovito Mesaga, Leona M. Bertana, Margaret Ang-Chui, Rosemarie Phi-King Tan, Jacinto Bellotindos, Jovelyn Saddul, Rolando Ellorente Jr. and Reginaldo Bacilio.

Ivy Catherine . . .

Picture, page A3

planned all this trip without informing her husband," Yasmin Arul said. "I don't know if that was a premonition on the part of my sister. She was supposed to the idea of their going to Thailand for Christmas."

The Tamaskus originally planned to spend Christmas at Ivy Catherine's hometown in Dolores, Eastern Samar, and to have their baby Marcus baptized there, Lorraine said.

They changed their minds because the baby's papers could not be processed in time for the trip to the Philippines.

This Sunday morning before the tsunami came, the Tamaskus left Penang City hotel in Phuket on their way to Chalok Beach in Phangnga. Ivy Catherine was found inside the vehicle on a road leading to Phangnga.

Ivy to be cremated

The remains of Ivy Catherine were identified by her sister, Yasmin "Sonsette Calvador as a temple in Thailand. She was to be cremated, her family said.

"We're all shocked. We're all upset," Yasmin said in an interview on radio dzMM.

"After the cremation, we'll go back in the area in Bicolandia to look for the bodies of the rest of the family," Yasmin said in the same radio interview.

Officials said Sales, the other family, worked as a cashier at the bottled blend, was a native of Lanang City in Davao Norte and had six children. There were no details on the circumstances of her death.

NBI forensic experts

Six experts from the National Bureau of Investigation will be part of the forensic team the Philippines will send to Thailand to help identify the Filipinos who may have died there.

The NBI team will collect and analyze DNA samples and study dental records and fingerprints, according to NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

The experts will include two forensic specialists, two dentists and two fingerprint experts.

Wycoco has directed the team to trace the casualties' parents or siblings and get from them tissue samples to be used for the DNA analysis.

Doctors and nurses

Aside from identifying the bodies of their fellow countrymen, Wycoco said the NBI team would also help in handling and tagging the thousands of bodies that had been recovered in Thailand.

The NBI operatives will also assist other forensic experts in collecting DNA samples to facilitate the identification of the other dead.

Officials said the 12 members of the Philippine medical team to be deployed in Sri Lanka were practically the same people who helped identify the victims of the Superferry 14 fire and the victims of the recent typhoons that ravaged Quezon and Aurora provinces last month.

The medical team is led by physician Romeo Almazan, Bicutan, one of the first doctors who rescued Quezon after the typhoons.

Almazan, along with other doctors, five nurses and two engineers, are leaving today and will stay in Sri Lanka for 15 to 15 days.

Service to mankind

"We're trained. We're used to this. Unfortunately this time, it hit our holiday celebrations, but this is a service to humanity and we will comply," Bicutan said at a press conference.

"Pero wala na rin if it is Quezon, we had to walk in knee-deep mud, in Sri Lanka, we might find ourselves walking on bodies," Bicutan said.

While all the members have served in disaster response and management, it would be their first time to be working together as a team.

"We immediately bonded," Bicutan said. "My only hope is that we continue to remain as one team when we get in Sri Lanka because it will be very hard to be separated in those instances."

DOH, other hospitals

The 12 people came from the DOH central office and different state hospitals.

The medical volunteers are doctors Joseph Espinosa, Vilma de la Cruz, Luis Jose Arroyo and Miguel Luis Antonio; Aida Uraldra, Alaria Ivy Ocampo, Oliver Mani, Ruth Bailo and Arvin Cortez; and engineers Rodel Pineda and Arnel Vargas de Dios.

Bailo, a nurse from Agusan del Norte, said she had raised feelings about going to Sri Lanka. Cortez, a nurse from the National Center for Mental Health who also served during the 1991 earthquake in Luzon, and she considered the Sri Lanka mission as a way to repay those Filipinos health workers once undertook.

Also to Indonesia

Another 16-member medical team will be deployed to Indonesia early next week. With reports from Blanche C. Rivera and Leila B. Salaverria

Correction

THE FIRST paragraph of yesterday's main story on Page B1—"BMC allows $1,575 for hernia duty free"—erroneously stated that Sub-Magnolia bid for 1-second Pearls Ltd was 481176 billion; it should be 481.176 billion.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in stories to Gerry Lirio, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th floor, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, fax No. 8897-0753, tel. No. 8896-6000 loc. 3306, e-mail to news.pdi@mail.ecnet.ph, and to inquirer@inquirer.net.ph.

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World opens arms, hearts and wallets

Previous page A1

rously shown to her by locals.

"Despite their own losses, they took care of us," Nesarina said, and pledged to raise money to help Sri Lankans cope with their losses when she gets back to her wealthier lifestyle.

Everyone from retirees and self-drivers to movie stars, tycoons and a queen dug deep to give what they could to help the millions of survivors.

People around the world, governments led by donor-ring Bush, friend, money and even air rallies to groups ranging from the Red Cross to Oxfam.

One of the donors was British's Queen Elizabeth II, who made a "substantial" personal gift, officials said.

The exact sum was not specified.

900 calls a minute

Britain's Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) said it had collected the equivalent of $39 million, less than a day after launching an appeal for behalf of 12 top British charities.

"I haven't seen anything like it," a spokesperson for DEC said. "It's quite a phenomenal response that it has come so quickly. In age of sharing, in the past, we have been getting 900 calls a minute."

DEC was operating 3,000 phone lines, she said. Its website was having trouble coping with the volume of pledges. Other donation websites, from Britain's Chambers Aid Foundation to Internet's Catholic Relief Services, had to suspend operations.

The world's biggest reinsurer, Germany's Munich Re, estimated the damage to industries and foundations in the affected regions would be at least US$15.6 billion.

That does not include potential losses of business and productivity. Some are cutting economic growth estimates for the hardest hit countries.

The cataclysm is stretching the world's ability to respond, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said.

"This is an unprecedented global catastrophe and it requires an unprecedented global response," he told a news conference.

Despite the worldwide generosity, UN officials said that more would be required soon. On-the-dish said the total would likely exceed the record $2.4 billion sought for Iraq last year.

Who will lead relief effort?

The Paris Club group of creditors is to examine a debt moratorium for those are safe economies, a source close to the club said.

A G8 move to establish a "core group" of countries to deal with the Asian tsunami disaster left open the question who would head relief efforts, a task traditionally claimed by the United Nations.

President George W. Bush announced the United States, Australia, Japan and India would lead the international response to the catastrophe and urged other nations to join.

G8 officials insisted the initiative did not conflict with the efforts of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which is charged with overseeing global, multi-pronged relief operations.

Complementary

"It will fit in very well," Secretary of State Colin Powell told the BBC. "I think this will be very complementary to all those other international efforts."

"I would expect that in a short period of time the core will expand and the entire international community will be involved, to include the European Union and the ideas that are coming from the G8 will respect to either dock linked at a donors conference, to all the work that the United Nations is doing."

G8 officials said the United States' wide-ranging military capabilities and the other three countries' proximity to the disaster put them in a position to rapidly muster a coordinated effort that others could join.

But they did not respond to questions of exactly who would have the final word on planning and implementation of what is becoming one to the core of the world's largest relief operations.

Mari Grossman, undersecretary of state for political affairs, expressed confidence all parties would work together.

"This is certainly not for us to do alone," he said.

EU won't be left behind

The European Union pursued its own initiative efforts. A spokesperson said the 25 member EU was hoping to hold a special meeting of aid ministers early next month to coordinate their activities.

Aid agencies in Australia and Japan stressed that cash was the most appropriate gift because it afforded the most flexibility to respond to changing needs on the ground.

Athletes join act

Britain raised its official donation to $96 million after a $m pledge of $20 and. Internet overtaken by public donations.

The American Red Cross said it had collected $18 million.

Cnn: Amazon.com collected $4.8 million in donations from online shoppers at its website.

Twelve hockey and tennis had sent $9 million. Dutch donors sent $12.7 million to aid umbrella and account. The Swedish Red Cross said it had collected $2 million over the last three days.

In the world of sport, Pakistan's cricket board said a fund-raising match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the Rest of the World was being considered.

India and Sri Lanka, badly affected by the floods, are both passionate cricketing nations, and Australian cricketers had already offered their Lanca match winnings to the victims. In tennis, the 19 top soccer clubs pledged almost $2 million.

Private companies joined the act. Many multinationals and the United States have said they will match cash donations by employees. Others have donated cash supplies.

Another kind of help

The American drugmaker Pfizer Inc. has pledged $1.8 million in cash and $26 million in medicinal supplies; Johnson & Johnson $1 million plus supplies; and Chinese group LP Mei pan Chow up to $5 million, including matched employee contributions.

But some needed a different kind of help.

Norwegian brothers Christoph and Espen Tabernaes set up their own Web page, www.help-lanka.info, to help their search for brother, Emil, his wife and their two children...all missing in Thailand.

"The worst is not knowing," Christoph said.

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SATURDAY JANUARY 1, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

Do you believe Manny Pacquiao?

By Renato Trinidad

WHO WOULD believe that Manny Pacquiao has not been training in earnest for his monumental rematch with WBA/IBF featherweight king Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico?

Not before Marquez, who brought Pacquiao was pulling flat leg when told of the Filipino's medical bearing celebrity's rare-free schedule during the holidays.

In fact, Marquez has suspected that Pacquiao's refusal to leave and train earlier at the World Boxing Club of Freddie Roach in California was just a ploy.

That was revealed by James Glaser of boxingscene.com to Jin Trivial Santos Nathanielus of the Manila Standard and Vivo Sports yesterday.

Nathanielus said Marco visited Marquez at his high-altitude training camp and was impressed at the discipline and dedication of the Mexican world champion.

The way Nathanielus put it, Bloom suggested Pacquiao must be out of his mind to take it easy while Marquez, who proved the better boxer in their first fight, has been sustaining a strict regimen since early November.

Pacquiao, told by trainer Freddie Roach to leave for his California training immediately after Christmas, has decided to leave Jan. 8.

The Ring Magazine featherweight boxing champion, now in Gordon, is scheduled to shoot a commercial for Burgos cookies on Monday.

"I believed him (Pacquiao) when he said he did not like to leave on Jan. 1 because he wanted a lucky date for his departure," Nathanielus told the Standard. "It turned out he has his other commitments."

By a photo count, Nathanielus and Hyperion, grumbling he finally departs for LA on Jan. 6, will have six weeks at most to train in earnest for the Marquez fight scheduled on Feb. 26 possibly in Las Vegas.

Marquez has reportedly said the ideal preparation for such a big fight should be 3 to 4 months.

The Mexican slasher counter-puncher also hinted that Mexican machismo got the better of him, the reason he has jumpstarted with disastrous results when he first fought Hyperion at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas last May.

Marquez, who's working at his speed and strength, has vowed to win more decisively.

Marquez said he would leave nothing to chance this time, Nathanielus reported.

The Mexican said he would be ready to stumble for "12 furious rounds."

Marquez, physically ready for action, starts sparring next week when Pacquiao is expected to start packing for his flight to his California training.

Pacquiao obviously has his own idea of how to stay in shape and catch up with Marquez, Nathanielus said.

The only way, however, is to train again, as he had done in his first meeting with Marquez when he suffered cramps, blisters and exhaustion.

Pacquiao vs Marquez gets Fight of the Year citation

PACQUIAO under siege: Juan Manuel Marquez (right) is expected to come doubly prepared for the rematch against the WP boxing superstar

IT SEEMS that the grudge match to end all grudge matches, Mairo Arreola slipping fish Morales in the third installment of their heated rivalry. There was the fall of Mike Tyson to the relatively unknown Lineley Williams. There there was the Bernard Hopkins' demolition of Oscar De La Hoya.

And yet, a leading newspaper in the US published those blockbuster fights and voted as the Fight of the Year the one match that didn't have a clear winner.

The El Paso Times picked the 11-round thriller between Filipino ring sensation Manny Pacquiao and Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez for the World Boxing Association/International Boxing Federation as the year's best bout.

The accolade was the latest involving Pacquiao, who is set to be honored at Sportscaster of the Year by the Philippine Sportswriters Association.

Popular boxing website Eastsidecorner also recently hit the 26-year-old Pacquiao the No. 4 best pound-for-pound boxer in the world, behind Floyd Mayweather Jr. Jr. and Bernard Hopkins.

The El Paso Times said the Pacquiao-Marquez match-up was an "incredible ebb-and-flow and dramatic duels to consummate."

"The Filipino's comeback victory against Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez in March to capture the WBC featherweight title was every bit as good as their 2003 original," wrote boxing writer Matthew Aguilar.

"But the brutal blur is down to between Filipino superstar Pacquiao and Mexican veteran Marquez edged out barely."

Aguilar noted that, "Marquez rebounded from not one, not two, but three first-round knockdowns to win a majority of the remaining 11 rounds on the judges' scorecards. The twelfth-round first-round and second, and, in the end, it was a razor-thin victory."

As it turned out, nobody did, and Pacquiao-Marquez 2 is perhaps the most anticipated fight of 2005.

The title fight rebuke ended in a controversial draw that allowed the Filipino champion to keep his WBC featherweight title also landed light in the Fight of the Year category by the boxing website Maxboxing, landing it No. 1 behind the three Morales III encounters.

Max Boxing's Dave Hiro said, "This nearly became one of the most stunning upsets in recent memory when 'The Pac Man' sent Marquez to the canvas three times in the opening frame.

"But somehow, Marquez would find enough resolve to pick himself off the floor, dust himself off and proceed to win the majority of the following rounds, using his precise boxing skills. In a fight filled with momentous shifts, nothing was settled as the bout was declared a draw."

Francis Cabeza

PSC guessing game continues

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's meeting with top sports officials has been won to Jan. 4, still in Malacañang, with the Chief Executive expected to give blessings to the 2005 Southeast Asian Games budget, to dust the new officers of the Philippine Olympic Committee and—hopefully—move for new Philippine Sports Commission chief.

Originally slated Jan. 2, the Friday date will meet the sports officials, particularly the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee officials, for the first time since she accepted the host tag of the 23rd SEAG last year.

But what's being keenly awaited is the announcement of the new PSC chief replacing Eric Buhain who was transferred to the Games and Amusement Board, the professional sports regulatory arm.

Rumors are rife that Malacañang has another short list of candidates for the PSC chair, who will manage the disbursement of funds to national athletes (base the 9500 million it regularly receives annually from the Congress and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., among others.

PSC commissioner Ruth Santiago, who has reportedly been turned-off as in charge of the agency, was originally set to be the new list of candidates.

Despite the information coming from several highly placed sources that he will be the PSC interim chief, his appointment papers have so materialized.

Rumors a surged against former athletic director Jun Capistrano and Manila Sports Council chief Ali Atienza as what is billed as a three-seasoned fight for the coveted PSC post.

However, sources said a test for a boxing boss which includes stamina but was not mentioned in the newspapers since the guessing game began two weeks ago.

Over the weekend, new names still cropped up including that of Rep. Rogelio Ferrer, former PSC commissioner and Nabbuena Antigua, former commissioner Eli Buenaga, and sports columnist and 88. Batanbatan pilipino Pete Lacaba.

As says runs, the President is set to welcome the marketing guru being cooked up by Palace with at least two giant private firms which are expected to shoulder the big chunk of the estimated P800 million to P1 billion SEAG budget.

Rep. Monico Puentevella, the POC first vice president and Palace ally, said that "if the President is ill at ease then," she would indeed the new POC officers led by president Peping Cojuangco, who is also the Philoil vice chair.

30TH ANNIVERSARY

PBA sets Grand Reunion

By Jane Navarro

WHEN the Philippine Basketball Association celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, expect a galaxy of its past and present stars in a grand reunion.

This has never been done before.

Commissioner Noli Eala is expected to get the nod of the Board of Governors to honor deal to rally all the players who have stepped their stuff when the league celebrates its anniversary on April 9.

Eala will present the proposal during the board's first regular monthly meeting this year.

It will be the first time that the PBA will acknowledge all of its players—regardless of how their careers came and went—in a festive and glittering ceremony.

"The players made the PBA what it is today," Eala said. "There's no better way to thank them than to recognize their exploits during the anniversary celebration."

The league has seen the likes of more than 400 players through the years, beginning with the original roster of league stands up of Crispa/Toyota Ford Corp., Topras, Manresa, Concepcion, U-tex and 7-Up, San Miguel, Crispa and Filsa.

Shirtless Hershey defeated Concepcion Carvajal, 105-86, and Topras downed U-tex, 105-102, before a sellout crowd of 10,000 at the historic Coliseum during the April 9, 1975 opener.

Eala plans to have former Sen. Gonzy Araneta and Ramon Fernandez, several stars of the game's ceremony spearhead a parade of players of these colorful era, which earned in the 1970s and end of the early 1990s.

Their contemporaries, Abe Gutalbon, Fausto Arnuis, Rey Advincula, Philip Cezar, Freddie Hubalde, Lim Eng Beng, Manny Paner, Ramy Fernandez and Bernie Fabiana, to name some, will also be invited.

Alaska Basketball, a four-time MVP like Fernandez, will honor the players of his time along with Allan Caidic, Bernie Cultura, Jerry Codiñera, Arc Ignacio, Jojo Lastimosa, Yeyoy Yñiguez, Samboy Lim, Vergel Meneses, Bonjie Perez and active players Johnny Abarrientos and Romeo Guevarra.

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With 140,000 deaths, worst is yet to come

tion," said Dr. Robert Edelman, a professor of medicine at the University of Maryland.

UN secretary general Kofi Annan said the disaster that has riled the Indian Ocean "defies comprehension" and "sets an unprecedented global catastrophe."

"But only we are going to be stretched in terms of manpower and human resources, but we are also going to be stretched financially and economically," he said. Full a billion dollars had been pledged so far.

Asian summit

Indonesia said it would host an international summit meeting on Jan. 6 to discuss how aid and rescue activities could offer what looks set to be the worst tidal natural disaster since China's Tangshan quake in 1976 killed, at least a quarter of a million.

Meanwhile, countries, their lives covered with masks or handkerchiefs against disease, besieged aid workers delivering food and clothes for the period in Indonesia's worst-hit Aceh province.

The tragedy is ushering in a number New Year's Eve around the globe. Some 6,000 foreign tourists, most of them Europeans, at popular Indian Ocean resorts, are missing and presumed dead.

Two of the Philippine-based victims were the country's Brazil case could mount into a fifth case because of increasing dependence on overseas.

The Iranian executives were returning to the President's New Year meeting, released the other day, in

subdivided by 6:00,000 km to the first 24 hours.

Aftershocks cause panic

Dozens of aftershocks have announced also exacerbated anxieties after a 9.0-magnitude earthquake, the strongest in 40 years, triggered an unprecedented series of waves that crashed into coasts from Indonesia to Africa at a height of up to 30 metres (100 feet).

Residents in Banda Aceh city on the Indonesian island of Sumatra bolted from their homes after a second straight night after aftershocks late on Thursday.

Cuba Powell to visit

US President George W. Bush, criticised for a slow reaction, said a delegation led by Secretary of State Colin Powell would visit the region on Sunday to assess needs.

The US Ambassador Lincoln already earlier said a flotilla of ships is being assembled for the region. Cuba to coordinate aid for the region. Cuba set US military transport aircraft were heading at Indonesia's northern city of Medan and dispatching counterparts to be trained to help.

Bush has offered $35 million so far. China became the latest country to beef up its contribution, pledging $63 million.

Relief problems

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said Jakarta had invited heads of state from across Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the United States to the aid summit which Annan, UN, World Bank and other agencies.

Getting aid to the survivors is the big problem, with many roads washed out, petrol stations not operating and poor coordination among the military and groups and governments.

Many villages and towns from Sri Lanka to Indonesia are now considered cutoffs, blanketed with the stench of corpses.

Weary volunteers and aid workers were piling body after bloated body into temporary mortuaries in Khao Lak, Thailand, where nearly 2,000 foreign tourists are known to be dead.

"They just keep coming," said New Zealander Shelley Cunningham, at a makeshift mortuary in one of the Buddhist temples near the beach. "Everyone is sick of it. "International forensic teams have flown in to identify badly decomposed bodies before burial.

'Please help'

Aircraft dropped supplies to nearly-obliterated towns in Sumatra, an island the size of Florida.

But food and medical supplies were stacking up at the airport on Friday in Banda Aceh, the provincial capital in case delivering aid to the devastated city, its name to remain unsafe.

Hundreds of people lined up with little rational the four working ground pumps guarded by police with semi-automatic weapons.

"The police are there, otherwise there would be violence," said Jerry Mirzal, 26, a food vendor. "Still the world we need more fuel." Hand, armies rages looked up on utility poles and homes across the city plundered. "Please help. Give us aid."

The hundreds of thousands of homeless were being housed in refugee camps around the Indian Ocean.

Diarrhea, malaria, dengue

Many of them, like Indrani, a 75-year-old farmer on India's remote Nicobar Islands, are deeply grieving.

"We are still numbed of the event and the thought of returning to the place where we lost everything," he said at a refugee camp in Port Blair, the main town in the island chain.

"But this island is still the only home I know and I would rather go back soon and die peacefully there than live as a refugee."

Experts said disease like diarrhea, malaria, dengue fever, and even meningitis and flu could strike soon.

Edelman said another wave of disease could come as mosquitoes moved to waterstanded areas.

Threats from mosquitoes

"People will be out under the stars and in tents," he said.

"There will be big swarms of people sleeping together. This is tailor-made for the kind of outbreak of viruses by mosquitoes," said Edelman, who is working to develop a vaccine against dengue fever.

"So people go into shelters and they are closely packed, you create the perfect storm for transmission and epidemic infections and so forth, and international teams rushed to respond—dengue fever and malaria," said Dr. Gilbert Burnham, Co-Director of the Center for International Emergency Disaster and Refugee Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Low-tech solutions

Low-tech solutions, such as using clothing to filter water could help prevent some epidemics, but most people are probably not accustomed to remember to take such measures, public health experts said.

Getting clean water is the top form of people affected will be the first step, but an overwhelming one, said Burnham.

"Where are you going to find a million plastic buckets in Sri Lanka right now?" he asked.

Reuters, New York Times

Animals have 'sixth sense'

WILD animals seem to have sensed an earthquake in the Indian Ocean tsunami, adding weight to theories they possess a "sixth sense" for disasters, experts said on Thursday.

Sri Lankan wildlife officials said the giant waves seemingly aroused wild beasts, with no dead animals found.

"Six elephants are dead, not even a dead hare or rabbit. I think animals can sense disaster. They have a built-in sense. They know when things are happening," S.D. Hettiarachy, deputy director of Sri Lanka's Wildlife Department, said on Wednesday.

Animals certainly rely on the known senses such as smell or hearing to avoid danger such as predators.

The notion of an animal "sixth sense"—or some other inplicit power—is as enduring one which the evidence on Sri Lanka's latest event is likely to add to.

The theories now rely on reports of impending disaster and panic-stricken animals and birds as shown as saved animals endowed with special powers or attributes.

Change in '05 must begin with GMA . . .

Businessman Raul T. Concepcion, a key member of the wide business leaders' organization, said the President should be more determined in pursuing the reforms needed, particularly in addressing the chronic budget deficit.

"I believe that the President must change starting in the first quarter this year otherwise we will be like Argentina," said Concepcion, referring to earlier warning by University of the Philippines-based economist that the country's fiscal crisis could worsen into a debt crisis because of increasing dependence on borrowings.

The business executives were returning to the President's New Year message, released the other day, in which she said that 2005 would be a year of "urgent change" after the country went through a season of triumphs and tragedy in 2004, the year she was given a fresh mandate but when thousands of people also perished in the killer floods that ravaged parts of Luzon.

Perennial resolution

Yesterday, the President announced yet again her perennial New Year's resolution to keep her infamous temper in check, make a new year this time.

During a visit to a typhoon-ravaged town in Negros province, the President told reporters her New Year's resolution was "to tone down [her] temper so I can run normal."

Having constantly failed to keep to her yearly resolution, Ms. Arroyo has apparently decided to move the goalposts closer to today's deadline.

Displays of presidential temper would be of shorter duration, especially if the object of her ire was not "deserving" or natural in nature, she suggested.

Ms Arroyo is known to lash out at Cabinet officials and appointees, sometimes in public, when the results that her orders have not been followed.

Promises

Aside from keeping her cool, the President also promised to keep the country's fiscal house in order to help it utilize the 2005 budget for her to finish agenda, and to belatedly live anti-corruption campaign.

Conception said the first quarter was critical as the President must convince Congress to pass the 2005 budget and some of the eight tax measures that failed to get approval last year.

"If we can convince [us] she will change," said Concepcion, who gave the President "a barely passing mark" for her performance last year.

He said the President's biggest shortcoming last year was her "lack of consultation."

Chinese-Filipino business leaders said the President must also change if the country's fortunes are to change.

"Rebranding her priorities would help," Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines President Antonio Tan-Torres said.

Concepcion said the first quarter was critical as the President must "do more handholding among the leaders of the country." Cleaning up the President has been usually punctuated with politics last year.

"This is another favorable scenario [as] that 2004 was an election year but I believe that she would gain more this year by changing her priorities and focusing more on economic issues," he said.

Tan-Torres said after winning a fresh six-year term, the President's public approval ratings have hit rock bottom as most Filipinos said they were disappointed with her handling of the rising cost of fuel, services and other economic issues.

Chua said that while the President would be criticized for her handling of the economy, "she deserved an "A" for effort and diligence."

He said that his Chinese-Filipino business leaders "are looking forward to" a more determined effort in 2005 to live anti-corruption campaign.

"Rebranding her priorities would help," President Arroyo's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said.

Bunye said the President was prepared to lead by example but "she needed the cooperation of every one."

He appealed for patience, particularly from Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz who has urged the Bush last to depend too much on the government or they would just end up getting frustrated.

"I just hope our Archbishop will be more patient because the President is also willing and beginning, bit by very soon," Bunye said. *With reports from Julie Aurelio, Jaime Laude and Shyrram Bondoc*

Estrada after the knife: New year, new knees

"I'll survive. I am nervous. They harvester away [at] the bones," he said.

But Jinggoy assured fans that the procedures were more advanced now and that he would be asking physical therapists.

"I prayed harder than I ever prayed before prior to the operation. I am leaving myself in God's hands," said Estrada who was wearing an expensive light blue jacket, dresses and leather slippers.

Lucky jacket

"This is a very expensive jacket worn exclusively by heads of states. This is a lucky jacket," he said, adding that he wore the jacket only during his birthday or New Year celebrations.

He said the jacket was given to him by a friend back when he was still a congressman.

The rescheduled surgery took place after Estrada and his family, led by his son, Jet Ejercito and son Jim, Jinggoy Estrada, agreed to have Chang, a prominent head orthopedic surgeon, do the operation.

Chang, an associate of Estrada's UP doctor Christopher Mon, was tapped for the operation after Mon failed to get a temporary license to practice from the Hong Kong Medical Council.

Chang, who is the head surgeon in the operation with Mon only assisting, is the doctor of Hong Kong's Asian Games team, Jinggoy said.

In a chance interview with reporters, Mon said he requested the decision of the HKMC and that he would not question it.

Estrada said he was honored by the prayers of his relatives and supporters.

Political intervention

"It's no longer important who would do the operation as long as it is done soon," he said, adding that the delay would give his enemies more reason to say that he was not serious about the operation.

He would use it as an excuse to go for a vacation or to escape his corruption trial in Sweat.

Until late Wednesday the Department of Foreign Affairs tried to get the government in Beijing to issue the Hong Kong health ministry to invoke to get Mon a license but to no avail.

"The political intervention did not work. The Hong Kong health ministry did not intervene," said Dr. Jose Gonzalez.

The Chinese government tried to talk to Hong Kong officials but later decided to abide by the decision of the medical council, respecting the fact that Hong Kong is an independent administrative region," he said.

4 rooms for family

Estrada said his family would be spending the New Year in the four rooms that he had taken at the hospital, praying for the success of his operation and recovery.

The disgraced leader said he never had a good new year following his ouster from power and arrest in 2001.

However, he said 2004 had been good to him because his followers had elected his son Jinggoy to the Senate after the successful acquittal of he'd his wife the previous year.

As for his New Year's resolution, he said he was determined to seriously work for reforms and would begin by organizing the fractious opposition on his terms.

"My wish is to [do New Year's] that for people to have more love of country and that God gives me a longer life so I can make this happen," he said.

Sorry state of nation

He said the economy was in such as a sorry state that majority of Filipinos are suffering from poverty, corruption and injustice.

"The situation is ripe for a revolution in my opinion," he said.

But whether he would lead another people power movement, he said, he would support him, Estrada replied:

"It is not a question of support for me but a question of a corrupt and badly mismanaged government, the fact that there is poverty, misery, widespread hopelessness and helplessness among the Filipino masses. Now are a government with no mandate and no support from the people lead the country to progress?" Rikka Argueta, Jhun AP

Buenos Aires . . .

fought to flee the flames and suffocating smoke.

"The fire started in a minute and we were so traumatic of people trying to escape," said survivor Ariel Morgan, 22, who lost a friend and a cousin in the fire and was searching for another friend at a city hospital.

The blaze, considered the deadliest of regionally recent disasters, may have claimed more victims because four of the clubs six doors were tied shut with safe-sate, according to former Minister Aníbal Fernández.

"It appears they were continuously to walk in or leave," Fernandez said.

Mayor Aníbal Ibarra said the emergency staff appeared to be after "so that people wouldn't enter without paying," and firefighters had to break it open.

Most of the victims are believed to have died from smoke inhalation.

The rock band playing at the Republica Cromagnon club in the predominantly working-class district of Once started the second set to about three due to the fire hazard, the report said. But after the first song, an hour before midnight on Thursday, a group there saw into the highly flammable foam ceiling.

Flares and a whistle away of fireworks are said on stream all over Latin America for the New Year holiday festivities with little regulation.

Late at hospitals showed that most of the victims were in their teens and 20s, but there were also children as young as 6 among the dead and injured.

City Hall set up an emergency center in the middle of the night for families to find out about the fire.

"The city does not remember such a great situation," city health secretary Alfredo Grant said.

Police said the fire was extinguished quickly, but exotic workers spent a few hours in the early phase on searchers from inside the club.

Television showed pictures of the bodies lying on the sidewalks outside the club.

Parents first rushed to the scene desperate to find their sons and daughters amid the chaos, but then flocked to the 13 hospitals to have the dead and injured sent to them.

At a makeshift morgue in a gymnasium by the club, witnesses said 30 bodies were lined up and family members were allowed to pass to identify them.

"There was a girl who came here, born around 19 years old," said Jorge Rodriguez, whose daughter Valeria Solange Rodriguez Moreno who helped in the rescue. "She was asphyxiated poor thing, and she was burned."

The blaze was the worst in the Argentine since a supermarket fire in Buenos Aires in December that killed nearly 400 people. The victims are accused of closing the doors after the fire broke out to stop looting.

Reuters

GMA declares war on eco-saboteurs

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The government may be going all out in its support of a revitalized mining industry to attract investments P500 billion dollars, but President Macapagal-Arroyo is making sure environmental saboteurs will not hold sway in this or any other industry.

The President on Monday said she had formed an intelligence-gathering group dedicated to environmental crimes, and would be urging legislators to make them capital crimes.

She said her government would prove to environmentalists as well as indigenous Filipinos that it valued ecological harmony over economics, particularly after the recent disasters in Leyte that were blamed on illegal logging.

"We will have meetings and consultations with the nongovernment organizations on how to best protect and preserve the interests of the indigenous Filipinos and the environment. If necessary we will come up with proposed legislation in order to preserve the environment," Ms Arroyo told reporters at Mansion House here.

Rubina Mondoñedo, an environmentalist concerned with the Bagyong Reporting Movement, asked the President her position on "ecological insecurity."

"We will make sure it (mining) is not a (destructive option) for the indigenous peoples," Ms Arroyo replied.

The President said her administration had asked foreign mining investors to use satellite technology to explore for minerals instead of digging for samples within ancestral domains where northern Igorotan communities and mining firms often exist.

"Mining is now in the 21st century and given that the 21st century is environment-friendly, focusing operations for business, will not be threatening any project (release an ecstasy) but we have their best for environmental protection," she said.

She also proposed legislation to strengthen the control of indigenous Filipinos over their natural resources.

Immediately after the Supreme Court legalized the entry of foreign mining firms this month, indigenous peoples petitioned Ms Arroyo to reverse her decision or water down the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA).

Baguio elders have consider the Igorots "as by protector against an aggressive foreign [market mining industry," said Kaldawa Oladin, spokesperson of the Cordillera rights advocacy group Bal- BIEN Bonita Cervantes and Filamor Tiupo Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

2 class shifts set in public schools

BEGINNING next school year, public schools would be required to hold two class shifts a day to cope with the worsening classroom shortage.

This means morning and afternoon classes in all public elementary and high schools.

At present, schools usually only hold classes in the morning.

But some schools have already resorted to two class shifts, even up to three shifts, to accommodate the ever-increasing number of students.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad announced that the two class shifts would be the new policy beginning June next year, since not enough new classrooms could be built by that time to keep pace with enrollments.

The Department of Education estimates a shortage of 57,000 classrooms.

Abad said holding two class shifts would minimize the shortage. "This is called maximizing existing resources," he told reporters.

Abad said classes should still be held for the mandatory six hours.

Public school enrollment has increased sharply in recent years as parents transfer their children from expensive private schools.

The DepEd previously does not have enough funds to meet the public school system's infrastructure needs.

The two-shift policy was supposedly part of the DepEd's plan to increase class size to 50 students to cope with the classroom shortage.

Sec Abad claimed he planned to close more students-into-classrooms, which are designed to hold only 45 pupils.

At present, the allowable maximum number of students in a class is 50, but some high schools have crammed more into their classrooms.

In high schools in Quezon City, Manila City, Cavite and Bulacan, the average class size is 60, Abad said.

He said a class size of 45 is "already very crowded and no longer conducive to learning."

Jimmy Z. Pantilgan

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

False tsunami alarm sparks panic in Indian Ocean region

NEW DELHI—The warning that fresh tsunamis were heading toward India's southern coastline Thursday sparked panic through out the region, prompting hundreds to flee inland, hit London-to-Delhi rush hour and jam roads, and That rescuers and villagers to scatter for their lives.

Hours later, the Indian government backed down, stating the alert was based on faulty statistical data. Only minor tremors were felt.

Experts have said such a system would have helped save lives in the disaster that has claimed more than 114,000 people since Sunday's 9.0 magnitude quake off Indonesia were still high waves racing across the Indian Ocean, devastating huts on are of nations across Asia and Africa.

Indian officials said they feared several underwater earthquakes early Thursday had triggered fresh tidal waves.

The tsunami alert was issued around noon in southern Tamil Nadu state, sending thousands of already traumatized residents, aid workers and refugees in the coastal town of Nagappattinam streaming out of the area in a panicked mass of cars and trucks.

"We got into a truck and fled," said Gandhimathi, a 40-year-old woman who, like many south Indians goes by one name. "We do not know where to go or when it is safe to return."

Panic gripped nearly everyone, including patients at the local hospital, in the town that has some 1,000 residents in the tsunami.

"Even people with fractured legs got up and said, 'We want to go. Bring us a vehicle and send us out of town,'" said Dr. Sudhandhiran.

India's evacuation warning was also heard in the neighboring island nations of Sri Lanka, where people climbed onto roofs and jammed the roads in their rush to escape. AP

VOLUNTEERS, foreground and residents run following a tsunami warning at Nagappattinam, in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu Thursday. —

New Year celebrations somber worldwide due to catastrophe

BERLIN—The traditional party of the year will be a somber affair across the globe.

From Asia to Europe, nations have relaxed in their New Year celebrations and revelers have been urged to donate some of their "party" money to help the millions affected by Asia's deadly tsunami.

"We can't look forward to New Year as we normally do given this catastrophe. We're horrified," said Franz Sauerzeit, a retiree from Essen in western Germany. "There are conflicting emotions, but I think there'll be greater restraint."

In Sweden, northern Lulea plans a candlelight procession and other festivities were being urged to forgo fireworks and other such.

Stockholm are mostly going ahead in Europe, but the mood is expected to be more muted.

"Normally at this time, we look forward to the events, hopes and fears of the New Year to Brussels. At this moment, however, our thoughts are fixated on what has just happened to Asia," BOMB Prime Minister Yves Thule said in a New Year message.

But Sydney, Australia, attack throws its biggest party of the year each Dec. 31, said it was too late to cancel festivities that include big skies leaders around to glowing harbor and multimillion-dollar fireworks shows from the Harbor Bridge.

Sydney City Council spokesperson Jeff Lewis said revelers would be urged to give generously to collection fund.

In Thailand, parties were scrapped across the country.

"The Thai government has called for cooperation from government agencies and the private sector to cancel all New Year celebrations," said government spokesperson Jakrapob Penkair.

A countdown party in downtown Bangkok, that was to have featured Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and glamorous veteran stars Mada Haruppon and Stone Pelliyan, was canceled and officials urged people in tsunami-affected provinces to ensure victims of the disaster festival.

Norway's leading daily Aftenbladet has urged readers to celebrate with moderation and media reported that the country's richest man—shipping mogul Jorgen Stubbe, had canceled his three-day Sydney.

At Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, where a million people typically throng on New Year's Eve, flags at half mast flanked an ice bar and food stalls. Organizers urged a moment of silence to the run-up to the midnight countdown.

Italy's two biggest newspapers will donate €1.50 euros from every copy of their New Year's Eve editions.

Norwegian and Denmark can donate money directly by mobile phone. Denmark's Queen Margrethe the chance to dip deep in the traditional New Year's day parade.

In Hong Kong, organizers of a large Jan. 1 entertainment event have decided to hold a private evening campaign instead.

In Rio de Janeiro, the world's biggest beach party will go ahead as per normal.

Saudi police hunt suspects in twin suicide car blasts

RIYADH—Two wanted al-Qaida militants were among 10 dead gunmen of a double suicide car bombing in the Saudi capital who were spotted by a graduate with police earlier in the week and launched their attack hastily, failing to penetrate the security installations they targeted, Saudi authorities said Thursday.

Wednesday night's car bombings targeted the interior ministry and a recruiting center for the kingdom's antiterrorism squad. The ministry said in a statement saying security forces killed three plotters in separate operations before the blasts and another seven in a raid on a Riyadh safe house shortly after the attacks. At least six Saudis and one Bosnian were among those killed.

The ministry's spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Mansour al-Turki, said that another three suicide bombers were killed in the two blasts, which also wounded 17 security officers and an unspecified number of bystanders.

Saudi TV reported that the bomb blast outside the interior ministry killed a limousine driver passing by in his car, but al-Turki said the driver was only wounded in the attack. Health authorities were not immediately available for comment.

The interior ministry blamed the assaults on a "deviant group" —a term the government has used in the past to describe al-Qaida, the militant group led by Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, who recently called for more attacks on his homeland.

Bin Laden accuses the West, particularly the United States, of seeking to destroy Islam and of pressuring the Saudi royal family for its alliance with Washington.

Saudi authorities said among the militants killed by police were a top al-Qaida operative in Saudi Arabia, Sultan al-Otaibi, and Bandar bin Abdul Rahman al-Fahhad. Both were on a list issued last December of 26 most wanted militants, more than half of which have been killed or captured.

An interior ministry statement said al-Otaibi was known for shooting militiamen and providing them with cars and explosives. It also claimed he had prepared car bombs used in a Nov. 8 attack in Riyadh that killed 17 and wounded 122. AP

A GIANT "chess ball" hangs from a 20-meter boom from Sydney's Harbour Bridge in preparation for New Year's Eve fireworks display Friday. —

Ukraine court throws out PM's complaints of poll irregularities

KIEV—Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych's bid to overturn his liberal rival's victory in a presidential election lay in tatters on Thursday after Ukraine's Supreme Court threw out his complaints.

With Prime-leaning Viktor Yanukovych already discussing his post-election program, Yanukovych suffered a further blow when the Central Election Commission threw out his objections about voting irregularities.

Yet he has refused to bow to opponents' demands to quit.

Although Yushchenko holds a lead of about eight percentage points in the preliminary count, a Yanukovych aide said new legal challenges were planned once the poll's result is officially published.

The United States said it hoped matters would be resolved quickly so that Ukrainians could get on with their lives.

Supreme Court spokesperson Liana Fedorenko said judges had now rejected all four complaints submitted by Yanukovych's team concerning the organization of last Sun. day's re-run of the Nov. 21 poll, which had been rigged in Yanukovych's favor.

"The last complaint will not be examined. All four complaints were rejected," she said, adding that two were filed too late and two were not clearly drawn up.

The Central Election Commission, which oversaw the poll, also rejected his allegation of widespread fraud submitted in 27 volumes of evidence.

Yanukovych's campaign manager, Taras Chornovil, speaking before the Commission handed down its decision, said the prime minister was determined to appeal again to the Supreme Court.

But he appeared resigned to Yushchenko's victory.

"We cannot recognize Yushchenko as president. But we do we want to divide Ukraine. We ask our fellow citizens to abide by laws... We will win the 2006 parliamentary elections," he said. Reuters

Sharon, Peres reach deal on unity gov't

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon reached a deal with Shimon Peres on Thursday to name the opposition leader his senior deputy, clearing a key obstacle in a unity government able to abandon the occupied Gaza Strip.

Israeli troops killed nine Palestinians during a cold rainy time, the bloodiest in two weeks, where fighting has not ebbed despite expectations that moderate Mahmoud Abbas will win a presidential poll to replace Yasser Arafat next month.

Most Israelis want to quit Gaza and cede most of it to Abbas but have negotiating with ceases-left Labor opponent on a unity government able to operate seniors from the Palestinian territory and a small chunk of the West Bank next year.

To end legal wrangling over titles, Sharon and Peres agreed that the Labor leader and veteran peacemaker would be the most senior "deputy to the prime minister" in the new coalition.

But the ruling Likud's Ehud Olmert would keep the position as the real next in line to Sharon with the title of "acting prime minister," officials in Sharon's office said.

Olmert would stand in where necessary and take over if Sharon dies.

"The green light has been given for pushing together a governments," said Michael Eitan, chair of the parliamentary committee that would otherwise have acted, ed to discuss extending the law.

Israeli commentators said a government could be named as early as Monday.

Sharon's plan is to evacuate 8,000 settlers living among 1.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, captured by Israel in the 1967 war. Four of 120 West Bank settlements would also go.

Meanwhile Israel began a process of compensating settlers due to be removed, setting its first deal with a chairman of a Gaza industrial zone to move into Israel, an official said. Reuters

2004 was more deadly in Iraq for US forces

WASHINGTON—By key measures of the level of insurgent violence against American forces in Iraq, members of Congress were told Thursday, attacks—the number has grown worse this summer.

While those numbers don't tell the full story of the conflict in Iraq, they suggest insurgents are growing more proficient, even as the size of the US force increases and US commanders succeed in soliciting more help from military Iraqis.

For example: ■ The US military suffered at least 848 deaths in Iraq since the final four months of the year, more than in any other civilian period since the invasion in March 2003.

■ The number of wounded surpassed 10,000, with more than a quarter injured in the last four months as direct combat, roadside bombs and suicide attacks escalated. When President George W. Bush declared May 1, 2003, that major combat operations were over, the number wounded stood at just 542.

■ The number of attacks on US and allied troops grew from an estimated 3,400 attacks in September to 5,000 in October and 5,956 in November. A year earlier the attacks numbered 649 in September, 890 in October and 864 in November.

US commanders insist they are making progress, in part by taking the fight more directly to the insurgents. And they remain hopeful that more US-trained Iraqi security forces will join the fight soon.

Some observers are more doubtful.

"The prospects in Iraq are grim," Dan Goure, an analyst at the private Lexington Institute think tank in Washington, said Thursday. He assessed the conflict as a standoff, with no clear indication that either side will achieve victory in the coming year.

"Neither side can truly come to grips with the other or his and decisive them," Goure said.

US commanders constantly use the insurgents' tactics and make adjustments. So although US forces have found tons of hidden weapons and ammunition, the insurgents still attack daily with makeshift bombs known as improvised explosive devices. They place the bombs along roads or stuff them into cars for suicide attacks. AP

Jazz giant Artie Shaw dies at age 94

LOS ANGELES—Jazz clarinetist Artie Shaw, famed for classic recordings of "Begin the Beguine" and "Oh, Lady Be Good" as well as turbulent marriages to movie stars Lana Turner and Ava Gardner, died on Thursday at age 94, Manning and Neiman Carlin said.

Shaw, who died at his Los Angeles-area home, had been in ill health for several years since he fell and broke a hip while walking his dog, Carlin said.

"He was in tremendous pain," he added.

Born Arshaf Jacob Arabovsky to a seamstress mother and photographer father in New York City on May 23, 1910, Shaw was about as restless a jazz star as one could find.

He formed and reformed bands, married and divorced eight times, gave up music for more than 20 years and put down his clarinet in 1954 never to play it in public again, quitting at age 44.

Critics dismissed his works as dull.

But soon they hailed him as a composer-arranger who gave, especially for his beautiful tone and control of his instrument's top register.

The Times Book critic Howard Mandel once wrote: "In Shaw's lips and hands the clarinet here as plaintive as it could ever get, it trilled into an ache, pleaded, lost or cast solitudes, and sounded devastating."

Among his famous songs were a 1938 rendition of "Begin the Beguine," which made him a success, all-star orchestral treatments of George Gershwin's "Summertime," Gershwin's "Oh, Lady Be Good," "Stardust," "Frenesi" on Low Call" and "Fantasy."

He once said the success of "Begin the Beguine" was like an anchor around his neck.

As smooth as his tone was, Shaw was a man at war with himself. A cranky, self-dedicated perfectionist, Shaw gave up the clarinet because he said he could not reach the level of mastery he desired.

In 1941, he ended a long mar-

SHAW

ital entanglement by reorganizing a band that tore his name and played his music—but with another clarinetist, Dick Johnson, leading the orchestra and playing the solos Shaw made famous.

Shaw traveled with the orchestra as a guest host and conducted the conclusion of the band's signature opening number, "Nightmare."

Shaw's bands in the 1930s and 1940s featured a stable who of jazz greats including Billie Holiday, Buddy Rich, Roy Eldridge and "Tex" Beneke. At the height of his popularity he earned $30,000 a week, a huge sum for the Depression Era.

He was one of the few white bandleaders who sought out black talent. Decades after Billie Holiday sang with him, Shaw still marveled at the sound of her voice.

"When she sang something, it came alive. I swear, that is what jazz is all about," he once said.

Shaw called himself a difficult man, a view brought former wives, including novelist Kathleen Winsor and actress Evelyn Keyes, into Gardner and Lana Turner might have agreed with. He recalled once almost stopping when a woman asked if he could play something with a Latin beat. Reuters

PARAGUA

TORRE

ANTONIO

SO

MENDOZA

CAOILI

Paragua tops RP chess rankings

DEPUTE Aufeng to formalize his Grandmaster title, Mark Paragua is still the highest-ranked among Filipino players in the World Chess Federation (Fide) based on the latest January 2005 rating list.

The 20-year-old Paragua, the most bemedaled Filipino athlete in the Vietnam SEAPlayer Games, has a rating of 2586, the highest among Filipinos in the Fide list.

Paragua went on a romp in 2004, winning top awards from consecutive times in the prestigious Abatho Group Grandmaster Tournament (GMT) held in Cebu, Ukraine, a former Soviet republic popularly known as the bastion of modern chess.

He was champion in the first and the third, and a runner-up in the second, finishing three GM norms in a record span of 30 days.

In the recent Cairo Tournament in Singapore this December, Paragua tied for first to fake in the due number of GM norms ranked under his belt.

Sadly, however, he has not received his GM title up to this day.

"Dinggap si mahuang pa sa para ko na hindi ako naging PSA Athlete of the Year at hindi pa pa nagsanod yung GM title ko. (I subsidy hopefully accept not winning the PSA Athlete of the Year award and have not received my GM title just yet)," Paragua said.

"Gagamit ko dinong pa ang bisa para sa bonus, dasaling naman po kun eh GM just continue to do my best for the country, the award and the title will come anyway," added Paragua.

GMs Rogelio Antonio Jr. (2639), and Eugenio Torre (2530) remain as second to third players, respectively.

Eleven-year-old Wesley So, now a Fide master, is at No. 46 in the list with a rating of 2389.

Torre, the 53-year-old, long-time chess legend, recorded the longest shift as Board One in the annual Chess Olympiad—18 years. But Torre, the first Filipino to obtain an life rating of 2600 Fide, is in his most prized first the International Peace award he received last Dec. 1 in recognition of his important contributions to chess development.

In the distaff side, WIM Jeorelly Bayubos topped the list with a 2216 rating, 35-points ahead of second placer WFM Cherrie Joy Londres (2151).

Former No. 1 player IWM Arlene Caoili is now rated under Australia, thus leaving her out of the list.

The Bitukon, Australia-based Caoili, who celebrated her 13th birthday on Dec. 22, now has a rating of 2207, No. 13 in the Australia list.

Meanwhile, ex-champion super GM Lucy Kuipers of Russia remained at No. 1 spot in the world with an Elo rating of 2664.

Former Hungarian star and current Queenie, New York, resident GM Gaurav Polgar heads the women's side with a rating of 2547.

Meanwhile, Bernardino Dino, Cesar Bisiker

RP MEN'S TOP 50 (G) Rue Paragua (2586), (G) Eugelo Torre (2530), (GM) Eugenio Antonio Jr. (2526), (GM) Cagayan Yam (2526), (R) Nopki Arizmendi (2527), (GM) Mellon Rafaelo G (2502), (GM) Emmanuelo Obenque (2482), (M) Jayson Gonzales (2468), (M) Mellon Dizo (2467), (M) Nicholas Rola (2466), (M) Enrique Paderes (2448), (M) Ronald Dalaki (2446), (M) Joseph Sacriney (2436), (M) Richard Bitoon (2408), (M) Mario Ramos (2404), (M) Antonio Salvador (2403), (M) Glen Sierra (2401), (M) Ferdinand Pena (2414), (M) Angelo Young (2413), (Unrated) Senator (2408), and (M) Ferdie Bergador (2398)

Sanchez settles for second behind Russian GM in Nice

SEVERODVINSK, Russia—Filipino Joseph Sanchez yesterday finished tied for first in the 20th International Nice Open Chess Tournament at the Le Grand Hotel Azur in Nice, France.

But the 34-year-old Filipino settled for second place behind top seeded Russian GM Vladimir Epishin (ELO 2599), who clobbered Adrea Lumnitzer of France.

Epishin, the former Russian national champion, won the tournament with a superior tie-break of 27.0 points over pacesetter/teacher 26.5.

Sanchez drew with local bet Hicham Hamdouchi and finished with 6.0 points.

Meanwhile, in Hastings, England, Jose Philippine enjoy IM Jayson Gonzales demolished Roger Pancrazio of England in romain unscathed after the second round of 60th Hastings International, of Chess Congress Thursday at the Hotel Spa.

The 33-year-old Gonzales cashed debuted Round-Clubman of England in the open.

Martin Bernardino, Contributor

InqBox
Question of the Week
What are your hopes and dreams for your family this Christmas and the New Year?
Senders of a brief (5 facts published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer T-shirt!)
Text your answers to 2161 (Globe) or 2202 (Smart)
(Maximum of 160 characters)
Name (Name answers can call Clara at 9478000 loc. 2150. Provincial answers can text inquirer at our network/roaming address to 2161 or 2202 as their answer will be treated as local)

NEW Jersey Nets finally got to suit up the man they call half-man, half-amazing. But despite the presence of high-leaping guard Vince Carter, who rests home for a second day, the Nets failed to hold off the Indiana Pacers in Vince Carter's home debut. Translated into a sold-out arena and New Jersey fans delighted at his aerial acrobatics. The 6-9 North Carolina product was recently acquired in a trade with the Toronto Raptors. AP/PA

Pacers spoil Ca
debut; Miami s

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Jermaine O'Neal scored 31 points to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 96-83 win over the New Jersey Nets, just hours after a judge ruled that he didn't have to serve the final 10 games of a suspension.

Jeff Foster added 16 points and a season-high 16 rebounds as the Pacers won their third straight game, matching their longest streak since the Nets 19 board in Toronto shut led to multiple suspensions.

O'Neal got a 25-game suspension, but an arbitrator reduced it to 15 games last week allowing him to return to action.

On Monday Judge George B. Daniels upheld that decision in New York about three hours before the Pacers and Nets took the court.

O'Neal spotted Vince Carter's debut as a Net in New Jersey.

Carter had 25 points to lead the Nets.

Richard Jefferson and Rodney Buford added 20 points.

Jason Kidd had 13 rebounds, 10 assists and four points.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Dwyane Wade had 31 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds to lead Miami past Detroit, 89-78.

Wade's first NBA triple-double helped extend the Heat's franchise-record winning streak to 13 games.

Miami, which has lost on Dec. 4, won 14 games in a month for the first time.

Shaquille O'Neal, playing with a sore back and ribs, had 23 points for the Heat.

The Pistons led for much of the game before falling apart in the fourth quarter, making just 3 of 10 shots.

Detroit's Richard Hamilton scored 21 points and Rasheed Wallace had 15, but they shot a combined 12 of 33 in the fourth quarter.

In Atlanta, Ray Allen scored 18 points and Rashard Lewis added 17 as the Seattle SuperSonics overcame the ejections of Jerome James and Danny Fortson to beat the Atlanta Hawks, 94-79.

The Sonics improved to 23-6, including 10-3 on the road.

Official Bob Delaney ejected James after getting the entire his first technical foul with 7:14 left in the third quarter.

James, called for an offensive foul, appeared to not a

MIAMI Heat center Shaquille O'Neal (32) briefly shows signs he wears for the basket over Detroit Pistons forward Antonio and center Ben Wallace (3).

James breaks facial bone, listed as day-to-day

CLEVELAND—Lebron James will wear a mask to prevent a broken bone in his face, but Cavaliers coach Paul Silas said Thursday he hopes the reigning NBA Rookie of the Year won't miss any games.

James fractured his left cheekbone and got a mild concussion after he was accidentally elbowed by Donosar center Zydrunas Ilgauskas in the second quarter of the Rockets' 96-87 victory Wednesday.

James, who told Silas that he briefly lost consciousness after being hit, will be fitted with the protective mask once the swelling in his face goes down.

The coach was relieved the injury wasn't more serious and thinks Cleveland's leading scorer will be back Monday at Charlotte.

"I am so happy. That's the best present I could have received," Silas said.

Silas expected that Ilgauskas's going to be out a long time, if they had to operate, he could have been out four to five weeks."

James, who turned 20 Thursday, was at home resting. He is listed as day-to-day.

He was moving across the lane on a drive when he ran into Mobutobo, whose sharp elbow bone dropped more than a few MRA plus crossed the paint.

James immediately fell to the floor covered his face and balled his fist in obvious pain while lying face down as play continued.

Play was stopped when the officials stopped the action, and Cleveland's medical staff rushed out to help James, who had to be helped off the court as he held a towel against his head.

As he walked into the Cave locker room with a hooded sweatshirt pulled over his head, James looked like a hooligan-boxer. Meanwhile Mr had short what happened.

"I never saw him," Mobutobo said. "The new thing I know—Sorry! He was laying on the floor. I hope it's not too bad."

James was coming off a 40-point performance with 10 rebounds on Tuesday.

He's averaging 21.2 points but had a career-low three points—all on free throws—with three rebounds and five assists before getting hurt Wednesday. AP

Judge upholds shortening of O'Neal suspension

NEW YORK—Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal won't have to serve the last 10 games of the 25-game ban meted out by the National Basketball Association for his role in a brawl that sparked a national outcry a fewyear judge ruled Thursday.

NBA commissioner David Stern had decided the 25-game punishment, which was reduced by an arbitrator, but the NBA took the matter to court, arguing that the arbitrator had no authority to reduce Stern's sentence.

"This ruling is not just a victory for Jermaine O'Neal, but for every NBA player, because now we know we have a right to go to an independent arbitrator," union attorney Jeffrey Kessler said.

Thursday's ruling makes permanent the temporary decision issued last week by US District Judge George B. Daniels, which allowed O'Neal to return to play.

The NBA had argued that arbitrator Roger Kaplan had no authority to hear an appeal of Stern's decision. O'Neal, Ron Artest, Stephen Jackson and Anthony Johnson of the Pacers for their roles in the Nov. 19 melee during a game at Detroit.

Artest was suspended for the rest of the season, Jackson for 30 games, O'Neal for 25 and Johnson for five by Stern.

Kaplan ruled that he had jurisdiction to hear her case and that Stern had just cause to issue the suspensions he gave to Artest, Jackson and Johnson, but reduced the penalty to O'Neal, citing his "character, community involvement and relationship."

In the three games he has played since Kaplan reduced his suspension, O'Neal has scored 84 points and grabbed 35 rebounds.

The NBA argued that Kaplan had no jurisdiction to arbitrate penalties he was considering.

According to the collective bargaining agreement, Stern has unilateral power when it comes to disciplining players for their on-court behavior, and all appeals go through him as well.

League lawyer Jeffrey Mishkin argued that the fight with fans was an event between on- and off-duty activity—commissioner David Stern's supervised clashes with Dennis Rodman's ejection from the court.

"We are puzzled with Judge Daniels' ruling because the collective bargaining agreement makes that an appeal of a suspension for 'conduct on the playing court' may be made only to the commissioner, not to an arbitrator, and Jermaine O'Neal's actions took place entirely on the playing court."

Five Pacers—Artest, Jackson, O'Neal, Johnson and center Lionel Hollins—and seven fans face criminal charges.

The Nov. 19 game between the Pacers and Pistons featured one of the ugliest melees in NBA history. Artest, Jackson and O'Neal all landed blows on unruly Pistons fans, who shouted the worst side of their behavior by chucking everything from plastic bottles to chairs at members of the Pacers.

Artest, who ran into the stands and attacked a fan whom he believed had been responsible for throwing a drink on him, received the longest non-disciplinary suspension in NBA history.

He has not played since.

AP

First day

SPECTATOR

Al S. Hershkovitz

ABA, are made it to 2005. Question: What do you usually do on this, the first day of the year?

Yours: PBA Commissioner Noli Eala. "First, I attend Holy Mass to thank the Lord for all that I have received and ask for strength for the coming year. Second, I visit my parents to ask for their blessing and guidance. Lastly, I spend the rest of the day with my children."

Ed Picson, the PBA spectacular now-jurored: "First, thanks for the New Year and spend the day watching cable with close friends."

Willy Marcial, the PBA public relations man: "Go to church. Then relax from the day with the Barbasa Igang swarm! Ammmm. That has become traditional with us in Batangas City."

Quinito Henson, the all-time best PBA analyst on TV: "On the first day of the year, our whole family goes to Mass to thank the Lord for the gift of life and pray for peace and understanding the world over. Personally I take sometime by myself to reflect on what I did in my life the past year and list my resolutions for the New Year. Our family also does something that's fun to do like eat. It's place we've never been to or whatever we can do as a family. I'll also try to find time to exercise and sweat off the calories from all the eating during the holidays. It's my daily mantra: I'll pray thus the Lord and strive to take care of my loved ones—my wife Monika, daughter Cristina, mom Nena, my in-laws, my homes and their families and friends and relatives. And of course, I'll write my columns for The Star."

Mig Conzon, sports the top honchos of BPI: "First day of the year? I try to make promises I can't keep so I don't promise anything. I see pineapple as definitely drink me to celebrate a new life, and pray for the homeless. That is my advocacy first."

Eugene Torre, Asia's first Grandmaster: "A little text from the New Year's celebration and then sat in my usual routine here in Baguio. A lot of tennis and of course chess for physical and mental activity and balance."

Elmer Yanga, the scout head, well-loved RP8 raconteur: "Attend Mass and give thanks to God for all the things He has given to and will continue to give us for the new year."

Nova Soria, the former senator: "Go to 'Eat Bulaga!' at noon. It's been a tradition that every year we always attend the first show of the year."

Tony Cuna, coach of the Manila Red Bull: "First Mass and have lunch with the family. Visit old friends in Mandaluyong. It's been this way since I can remember."

Aries Espinosa, the Inquirer's happy-mouth Editor: "Nothing really special. After cleaning up the yard, making sure there are no leftover firecrackers and unexploded, I then go straight to the PSE office to work. For me, Jan. 1 is just a state of mind. Just another day after Dec. 31 and the day before Jan. 2."

Michael Mott, the crossword-structure-ist with distinction: "I pray to God for the year. Why? So that He will be my whole year."

Veteran linksplaying my son-in-law Jo-vented logician: "Good morning, God. Thank you for your continued trust."

Happy New Year!

arter NJ still hot

YAO: Seemingly insurmountable lead.

Yao leads All-Star balloting

NEW YORK — Yao Ming is more than 60,000 votes ahead of Shaquille O'Neal in the race to finish No. 1 overall in NBA All-Star game balloting.

Through two rounds of voting, Yao — the center for the Houston Rockets — has 1,377,458 votes, trailed from the Los Angeles Lakers to the Miami Heat in the offseason, tops the Eastern Conference with 1,311,762 as of Thursday.

Yao's lead among centers in the West is seemingly insurmountable. Sacramento Kings Bibby a second with 197,336 votes.

Fans can vote through Jan. 23, and All-Star starters will be announced Feb. 3. The game is Feb. 20 in Denver.

Minnesota's Kevin Garnett, the reigning league MVP, is third overall, leading West forwards with 1,142,804 votes, followed by San Antonio's Tim Duncan (886,147).

Yao's teammate Tracy McGrady (1,060,230) is the top guard in the West, trailed by the Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant (1,005,050).

In the East, Steve Nash's Shaw Center (398,817) and Orlando's Grant Hill (390,861) lead the forwards, while Cleveland's LeBron James (810,263) and Philadelphia's Allen Iverson (805,179) top the guards. AP

NY Yankees find a way to acquire 'Big Unit'

UPHILL: Johnson will be pitching for the New York Yankees next season.

NEW YORK — The Arizona Diamondbacks and Yankees were close to agreement on a deal that would send Randy Johnson to New York.

Packers Javier Vazquez and Brad Halsey were to go to Arizona along with young catcher Dioner Navarro and about $9 million, a baseball official said Thursday on condition of anonymity.

The agreement must be put in writing, a process that will not be completed until Friday in the earliest, the official said.

While not confirming the substance of the report, Diamondbacks managing partner Jerry Sandrick confirmed that the teams "are in serious discussions."

Sandrick also indicated Arizona was seeking an another deal involving Vazquez. One possibility comes was the Los Angeles Dodgers, who would send outfielder Shawn Green and pitcher Brad Penny to Arizona.

The separate trades would, in essence, result in the same conclusion as the three-team effort that fell apart last week when the Dodgers backed out.

"We would not agree to a final deal or a trade of Randy Johnson unless we believed it would benefit our team," Sandrick said. "That would require in return at least two significant major league ballplayers."

Sandrick said, however, that no deal could be completed, as the paperwork once submitted to the commissioner's office, until early next week.

Johnson, a 10-time all-star, would join a re-shaped rotation that now includes Carl Pavano and Jaret Wright. The Yankees already had Mike Mussina and Kevin Brown, but blew a 3-0 lead in the AL championship series and lost to Boston.

The money New York is sending Arizona would offset some of the $26.5 million Vazquez is owed: $10.5 million in 2005, $11.5 million in 2006 and $12.5 million in 2007. New York is making the final $2 million payment of this signing bonus, which is due Friday.

Johnson was 16-14, a record skewed by playing for a team that went 51-111. And for the 1998 most losses in major league history. The 2-time Cy Young winner was 0-7 with a 6.32 ERA in his 10 starts. He led the majors with 300 strikeouts, was second with a 2.60 ERA and pitched a perfect game against Atlanta.

In addition, the Yankees were close to an agreement on a contract with Tino Martinez that would bring the first baseman back to New York. The one-year deal with Martinez, who was at New York's minor league complex Thursday in Tampa, Florida, would be worth between $2 million and $3 million, a baseball official said, also on condition of anonymity. AP

Sporting world gives tsunami victims aid

SYDNEY — The sporting world, from football giants Manchester United to glamorous tennis star Maria Sharapova, has united to help raise money for victims of last Sunday's tsunami disaster.

The English Premier League has pledged 1 million pounds ($1.92 million) with the top 20 clubs, including Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea, all contributing at least 50,000 pounds each.

Sharapova, who has close links with Thailand, and other clubs have started their own funds, while the Australian government's a minute's silence would be observed at the weekend's fixtures.

"The Premier League and our clubs have strong connections throughout the region and there was a real feeling amongst the clubs that we should do something as a collective to try and alleviate some of the pain and suffering," Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore said in a statement on the league's website. The cyclone-hit Asian nations joined Fiji to raise funds after India and Sri Lanka, two of the sport's major playing nations, were devasted by the tsunami that followed a 9.0-magnitude earthquake in the Indian Ocean that has killed 125,000 and left millions homeless.

Sri Lanka's tour of New Zealand was postponed this week as the players could not be guaranteed safe and the International Cricket Council (ICC) is planning a relief match between an Asian eleven and the rest of the world to raise funds.

Although the logistics behind this effort are complicated, the ICC is trying to get the cricket nations to rally and raise funds for a major humanitarian cause," Pakistan Cricket Board chief Shaharyar Khan told Reuters.

The Australian team donated the prize money from their second test win over Pakistan this week.

The England and South African cricket teams held an impromptu auction of memorabilia on Thursday after the second test in Durban, with autographed players' shirts, bat tubings and awesome fees in the gutsy going to charity.

Russia's Wimbledon tennis champion Maria Sharapova gave $75,000 to Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on Thursday while she was in Bangkok for an exhibition match.

The ATP, the governing body of the men's professional tennis, also announced it was joining the global effort with a series of fund-raising activities during next week's Chennai Open.

The ATP said it would donate its $35,000 fee for the tournament to Unicef and would hold a fund-raising auction of tennis memorabilia and tennis including a shirt owned by defending champion and former world number one Carlos Moya.

Jonas Bjorkman and Mahesh Bhupathi, who are the top-seeded doubles team at the Chennai Open, said they would donate their prize money and urged other players to join them. Reuters

ICE HEATS UP: Canada's Dion Phaneuf (3) collides with Finland's Kimi Nabb at the World Junior Hockey Championships in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Canada won the game, 6-1.

Lakers become trigger-happy

NEW YORK — If's not entirely but it's close, especially as NBA coach, which is why Rudy Tomjanovich did last season. The Houston Rockets still set records three-points, as it has been for the past 25 years, and the Lakers today is there's no connection on pace to demolish the single-season franchise record of 1,300 set in 1994-95.

When Tomjanovich got tongue-tied was the concept that the Lakers might actually benefit from launching more 3-pointers, not fewer.

They are averaging 21.3 3-pointers per game and shooting 36.2 percent from behind the arc. Only the Phoenix Suns and Seattle SuperSonics have taken more 3-pointers this season than the Lakers.

But a deeper look at the numbers reveals the Lakers are averaging 7.400 games per 3-point attempts and 0.416 points for every two-point shot they take. That explanation is what prompted Tomjanovich on Tuesday.

"There might be some sense out there saying, 'Take a couple of threes if you're shooting that percentage,'" Tomjanovich said. "I don't believe that, but I have to analyze that in the situation."

Tomjanovich said he would look at the Lakers' 3-point shooting during the next days of this month. The Lakers host 22 on Tuesday against Toronto, including five in the last 6 minutes to join the game-saving.

Stanley Adams, Jermaine Jones and Brian Cook entered Wednesday ranked in the NBA top 10 in 3-point shooting, but is an area to break Nick Van Exel's franchise record of 1-3-pointers made in a season.

Tomjanovich said his only criteria is that the Lakers take 3-pointers after breaking down the defense with penetration. He does not keep track during games, although the coaches were after one night.

"If a guy takes a good shot, what we think is a good shot, I'll go and say, 'Well, was that 36-, 28- or 29-?' Tomjanovich said. "I just take each individual possession."

With a greatly reduced inside presence after losing Shaquille O'Neal, the Lakers have become a perimeter-driven team. The biggest problem with adding more 3-point shots is that the Lakers already lack balance in their offense.

New York Times News Service

Mango Tee invitational adds playdate

Due to popular demand, organizers of the Mango Tee Invitational, the member-guest tournament of the exclusive Mahong Golf and Country Club, decided to add another playday to the annual event, changing the way the 64-man teams to be included in the roster.

"This move of allowing more teams is long and coming. We felt that we're now ready to accommodate a bigger field," said Mango Tee tournament chair Jun Galvez, adding that the additional slots were quickly grabbed and there are still 100 teams on the waiting list.

The playing schedules are as follows: Wednesday morning/Friday afternoon, Wednesday afternoon/Saturday morning, Thursday morning/Saturday afternoon, Thursday afternoon/Sunday morning, Friday morning/Sunday afternoon.

The 2004 Mango Tee which has Hotel Connections and Filipinas Shell as sponsors/partners will be held on Feb. 2-6 with the roster now up to a record 320 teams which will be playing their 36 holes rounds over a five-day period.

While Mondelez Blutes Philippines Inc. and Globe have already signed to sponsor the event, the whopping hole-in-one package, Calabasa said, also they will be introducing a new concept that will make everybody in the flight of an automatic happy.

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OPINION

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Hope

THE LATEST Social Weather Stations survey bears glad tidings—if we look hard enough. At first glance, the main storyline would seem to be essentially negative. The number of Filipinos optimistic about the new year has dropped dramatically in the last two years. From 93 percent in 2002 and 90 percent in 2003, the index of optimism has fallen to 81 percent.

The nationwide survey was conducted between Nov. 23 and Dec. 2, at the very time the country was struggling with the

EDITORIAL

seamlike tragedies in Asteria, Quezon, Nueva Ecija and Oriental Mindoro. If the poll had been taken two weeks later, it would not have been surprising to see the number pulled down even lower by popular sentiment over the sudden death of Filipino icon Fernando Poe Jr.

The latest finding also compares unfavorably with the results of a similar survey conducted at the end of 2000. At that time, the country was reeling from "Jueteng-gate" (Bonus Star Gov. Chavit Singson's spectacular charges of corruption against President Joseph Estrada) and the cataclysmic events behind the first impeachment trial in our history. In the midst of great political uncertainty, the SWS found that 87 percent of adult Filipinos were hopeful about the coming new year.

The SWS noted that public opinion about hopefulness over the New Year is determined in part by public opinion about happiness at Christmastime. The same survey found that the number of Filipinos who expected a happy Christmas fell from 82 percent in 2002 and 77 percent in 2003 to 64 percent in 2004.

Of this new diminished majority, around eight out of 10 saw hopeful prospects in 2005.

The downturned in both the happiness-in-Christmas and hopefulness-in-the-New Year numbers is worrying. Apparently, the political poison in the air, which has persisted since Estrada's ouster and reached a new level of toxicity during the election season, has taken its toll on a mass once topping international surveys as the happiest people on earth.

But despite the depressed numbers, it is still possible to look forward to the new year and all it brings with reasonable hope. In the first place, 81 percent is still an impressive majority. (Compare the numbers in Germany, for instance. Since reunification, the optimism index has not topped 50 percent.) Secondly, the places where we expect to see dismal numbers because of unsolved poverty or continuing strife have actually done well in the hopefulness survey; in Mindanao, for instance, 87 percent of the people look to the new year with optimism. Thirdly, the optimism of the ABC demographic classes, the engine of the economy, remains robust at 90 percent (statistically similar to the previous year's results).

But numbers alone do not reveal the whole story. The latest survey shows that there is in fact a countertrend for hope.

We must never underestimate the resilience of a people who persist hopeful despite the odds. Where others may see only ignominy or a benign fatalism, we see spirit.

There is no doubting the reality that states all of us in the face: The country is in a funk, depressed by a sense that events—especially economic—are beyond our control, and solutions—especially political—are at best inadequate.

But that may be because we are looking for answers in the wrong directions. The latest SWS survey suggests that the country's turnaround source by literally turning our focus around—to the public's things-will-get-better attitude.

To be sure, there is a difference between attitude and fighting spirit, that resulting discipline that makes things possible. But in anyone who has ever been employed or hired an employee knows, attitude is the great "differentiator"; it is what makes one candidate, one prospect, stand out from all the rest. And attitude can be trained, tested, perfected, it can get mature into a daily discipline.

One reason why the country seems adrift is because the Filipino's innate sense of improvisational resourcefulness, his ability to adjust to circumstances, is not yoked to a national purpose.

Except in general terms, no political leader has sought to harness the public's can-do attitude to a cause greater than family or party. That is a shame. As the SWS survey suggests, the country's true and lasting source of hope is the people's own abiding sense of it.

Happy New Year!

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto A. Cruz

TODAY is the first day of the New Year so I shall begin on a happy note. These are the things I expect in 2005.

There will be more harmony among our people, a national resolve to work together in solving our common problems. Unity will replace political hostilities and the social and economic divisions that divide us. We will survive hard, or it is impossible for us to do so. The international community, particularly in our own continent, knows of us will be ashamed to be known as Filipinos.

Our economy will improve tremendously. The Philippine peso will recover and gain new strength. Our exports will outgrow our imports, and our net foreign indebtedness will grow, foreign investments will enter but will not replace or control local enterprises. Residents Filipino businessmen and women will compete on equal terms with the no longer dominant aliens.

The unemployed in the country will receive a license and increase employment and the GNP. Oil will be discovered to give an added revenue. We will no longer be called a nation of domestic helpers who provide our offshore workers a peculiar and heroic patriotic feeling in our own country. Even our domestic helpers will stop working a heroic life abroad and can stay here to care for their own people.

Social justice will cease to be a mere phrase but becomes an effective remedy against the unreasonable separation of the rich and the poor in the enjoyment of life's benefits, rather well as but be an equal partner of capital in their joint venture for prosperity. Women will have the same opportunities for merit and wages as men, particularly appropriate at this time, when *most everyone is not only making some kind of assessment of the current situation—the state of the province, the year that was*—but also is wondering about what the future will bring.)

"UNCERTAINTY" and "unpredictable" are adjectives that go hand in hand with "future." There are too many changes taking place in the world today at a breakneck pace. Public to the name, some of us have come to be a harsh between one sets of forces, those that threaten people's lives, and those that improve them—forces of life and hope versus forces of death and despair. Thus, there is not one hard outcome, but rather many different possibilities, as events, decisions, fortuitous, depending on how that force rises is going.

Talking there, invites to think about the future! First, because at the very least, it helps us to prepare for whatever future comes, planning for opportunities, as it were. More importantly, it positions us to shape the forces as guides. As Peter Drucker said, the best way to predict the future is to create it.

The most logical question would be, even if we were to think about the future, why the future of the world? We have enough on our plates just thinking of the future of our own country, our own community.

Excellent point. However, I advance two reasons: in this day and age, global events influence their course in the smallest corner of the world, and what happens in one small area may have worldwide repercussions. The second reason is that whether we are thinking about our larger or smaller world, the line of reasoning is the same, and we can apply what we learn to either one or the other.

So what will the future bring? There is as many spectrum of scenarios (as described by the future of the Future 2004 Report), with one some panel in the room until ordered termination. The film limped and either handle groups will be expressed or destroyed, and the film will be finally subdued. Protestants who have signed to the affiant seniors can now get status to become productive farmers again.

The elections will be more intelligent in the sense of the show audiences. Even the Ifalyn crowd will no longer be induced by stunt attractions but will seriously consider the credentials of candidates for public office. There need not be gun-toting shotgun shooting, as there used to be in gun-toting days. Instead, there will be peaceful and political dynasties effectively repressed.

The Binasal political leadership will be repaired and elevated. The opposite of the present government. Iconic Alcantara, as Congress and the local offices, will make the voters more sensitive. They will discuss serious issues with the candidates instead of merely mouthing slogans and dances and exhibitions of their talents. They will give a spirited participation procedures like the battles in the Senate and the senators in the current House.

Graft and corruption will be considerably diminished. The patronage and other officials who have betrayed the PNOS with their financial deficiencies will be condemned and severely punished. So will their equally guilty spouses. Crooked executive officials, dishonest legislators and statesmen in the judiciary can no longer use the small fry as evidence as their

(Copyright 2004 Augusto A. Cruz)

Be aware of wonder

GET REAL

Sol Vanessa Collera-Montenegro

(The following is based on a keynote speech, titled *'A World of Change, a Common World,'* which I delivered last month in Berlin at the *first International Conference of Community Foundations*. It may be particularly appropriate at this time, when *most everyone* is not only making *some kind of assessment of the current situation—the state of the province, the year that was*—but also is wondering about what the future will bring.)

"UNCERTAINTY" and "unpredictable" are adjectives that go hand in hand with "future." There are too many changes taking place in the world today at a breakneck pace. Public to the name, some of us have come to be a harsh between one sets of forces, those that threaten people's lives, and those that improve them—forces of life and hope versus forces of death and despair. Thus, there is not one hard outcome, but rather many different possibilities, as events, decisions, fortuitous, depending on how that force rises is going.

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So what will the future bring? There is as many spectrum of scenarios (as described by the future of the Future 2004 Report), with one

(Copyright 2004 Sol Vanessa Collera-Montenegro)

end describing gloom and doom, the other end describing boom and boom. Let's start with some of the items on the dark side.

Item: A heightened potential for conflict over water basins (40 percent of the world's people live in 200 major international water basins shared by more than two countries) and over beliefs and customs (20% minority groups that could be in future conflict due to different forms of religion). One nonobvious factor here can is that the world will be in for 11 years of war starting in 2015.

Item: Population growth is faster where people can least afford—increasing the climate (and conflict) between the haves and have-nots.

Item: Technological advances increase the possibility of cyber terrorism and the creation and use of weapons of mass destruction by individuals acting alone.

Item: Global warming growing beyond human control, will be reaching catastrophic proportions.

Item: Transnational organized crime may be able to buy the technology to create new forms of crime to generate even more profits and outsmart governments.

But there is the brighter side, too, caused by the technological optimists.

Item: Synergies and confluences of nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science that will result in products ranging from biomimetics to molecular engineering, from increased agricultural productivity to increased longevity (accurate diagnosis and treatment of cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, pharmacy-on-a-chip that come without medicine).

Item: Depletion of natural resources will be replaced by made capital, technological change will continue to result in improvements in economic productivity and equal positive values dependences on raw materials, thus ensuring sustainable development (defined as the capacity of the economy to maintain consumption at a constant level indefinitely).

Which of the infinite spectrum will prevail? That depends on us. What do we need to do? First we need to emulate the kind of farmer we were, and are willing to work for. Then we set our goals — not just for ourselves, but specific, measurable, clearly defined deadlines. On a nonscientific (but goals are usually instinctive)—an improvement in our standing based on the United Improves the prospects for others, a determination in our respective organizations on the capabilities of our people, and not strategies, tailored to our specific needs.

The bottom line is that while the world is constantly changing, we are in charge. Our future is shaped by us—by our commitment to our capabilities and our dreams. Remember, to all that overwhelming? Not at all. Because it comes out that behind humanity's power is an inert the source of events are the timeless values that are fostered in... kindergarten!

Robert Fulghum, in his book 'Everything We Really Need To Know We Learned In Kindergarten' lists these dozen items: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you have been unkind. Flush before handwashing. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life...learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder.

Happy New Year.

A great teacher passes away

HAPPY New Year! Despite all the catastrophes and tragedies we have seen in the old year, we look forward to this new one with hope and faith in God's providence mercy and is our true comfort. (2-in-1 people)

* * *

Conception "Ching" Godolphin, one of the best-loved teachers of the University of the Philippines, who passionately taught, perhaps, three generations of students in the building (our publisher Eugene Tandoy) since 1950, passed away a few days before 2004 ended. Death came to the 84-year-old professor a few days after the second anniversary of her retirement from teaching. She was buried last Thursday, after moving necrological rites were held by her disciples from across the generations, with her passing, a pillar of UP and a source for the nourishing profession is gone.

* * *

Sir Godolphin's surname (at Dec. 16, 2005), her disciples put up a book of essays, detailing the great many things Ching Godolphin did for them. And she motivated by Susan Villareal Sulit, she took to titled "Where Heads of Ching Godolphin" and is titled as "Touched by the Human Story." Ching Godolphin, the book's editor, says, "Ching, being and kind, silent and sensitive, who love her and would cherish her for all time. They are here, too because they too saw she is a Font of story, a Fount of infinite grace, a river of all human needs."

* * *

Among the 41 former students of Godolphin who that book contributed to the pool of memories of her was Sen. Senator M. Pardon Jr. He first encountered Godolphin in her class in Political Economy in the early '50s. He was then a pre-med student. As if that wasn't enough, Pardon took his next English course, speech and drama, under Godolphin, earning a grade of "1." In part, he says, more than the grade, he earned a special place in her heart by delivering a rousing speech in a mass rallies that was symbol "25 years later." Godolphin, Pardon says, "was overcome and embraced me in her crowning glory by 'calling' him Godolphin. As the editor noted, "Only a Johnny Pardon could have pulled it off."

Pardon's piece, titled "The Farside of Ching Godolphin," speaks of her virtues as only he can capture it, in his characteristic "paradoxical" ways. Here it is:

The Lawmaker entered lessons eager but confusion. He was curious to see how the place and the people around look, for on earth, his own vision of heaven and the expectations of others varied. Some said that in heaven people were too silent-sometimes walking on clouds. Others said it would be dull, with everyone dressed in white robes and playing the lyre; still others thought people there would have wings and halos.

As he opened its the sight of the people shocked him. They had grotesque and disfigured shapes. Many parts of their body were missing. Some had the complete human form but had no heads, arms or legs.

He asked an angel passing by, "Is this hell where I landed?"

"No, this is the life beyond," answered the angel.

"But why are the people so mangled?" the former president.

"If you look closely, you will see that each one has only a part of his original body," explained the angel. "For the people in heaven is that you reside than part of your body you need most and lose the parts you have employed. That man over there," the angel pointed on a pair of legs, "was a long-distance runner. All that remains are his racing limbs."

"The farmer surveyed the surroundings. It was true...he saw only body parts."

There was Cicero, a lawyer, but only had his big mouth and thick lips left. Near to him, he continued to blubber and harangue the people around him.

In one corner was a driver. His gnarled and calloused hands were still clenched as though they were still steering wheel. He was alternately shouting and groaning.

A scientist had only his brain floating in the air. Surrounded of his useful second him, he still thinking of equations and theories.

A government clerk had only his numerals left, and anxiously sat on a squeaking chair, busy with his own sense of importance.

A pair of lovers stood near him, their expressive figures. He kept praying for the salvation of mankind, pardoning the poor who got poorer each day.

A comedian had his body shoulders, ready to carry every imaginable load.

At the corner of the spacious area was a big basin, bearing with life and feeling. The farmer could not guess what it was.

"What is in that huge and expansive basin?" He asked an angel.

The angel looked at him and answered with polite and submission.

"In that basin is Ching Godolphin who nurtured and mentored thousands of young minds at the University of the Philippines. She bridged their minds and energized virtuosity. Her students called her 'mother,' the angel continued, "was basin is. Further."

* * *

Good teacher all those who nurture dreams she sees San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, who commemorated in the late '60s and '70s. This coming Sunday and Wednesday, Jan. 4 and 5, there is to be a gay love in-ins, something very old take place at Golden Gate University. Rudolf Nureyev is a scriptwriter, a collection of poetry written and edited by the late Joe Rodriguez, Francisco Rodrigo Serrilla.

A former lawyer, writer and freedom fighter, who joined the anti-Marcos movement in exile with Senator and Corazon Aquino and whom he replaced as Sen. Benigno Aquino, has now declared the "Monsignor" because of his strong opposition to the RH bill. Ang Kapatid pose. In Filipino—a real Bolshevik. This Teacher and mentoring, famous for writing his own poems, which have never been read before, largely because they were unobserved and unnoticed.

I am You

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

Lately, I've been doing the same thing with friends, blog and other places where human tragedy has been unequalled. I have caught myself in tears, praying and sending good healing thoughts and hope to people overthrown, and mentally contributing in some way to the effort to rein and alleviate suffering at least where it is physically closest to me—helpless and the desperately poor that I personally encounter. Last night, I felt such a heaviness in my heart about how crappily unfair it happen so many, so many times, and how the world's Unified efforts, distressing, still is required to it is such a gargantuan effort. I had a hard time sleeping.

* * *

YOU'RE GOING AHEAD A QUESTION ON THE WAY which I would consider with you.

Kindness
Naomi Shihab Nye
Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how sharp the landscape can be.
Intimate the sequence of kindness,
how you ride alone,
a bicycle no one else can use,
standing on a long road vowing
the passenger's waiting vision and chicken
will turn out the window forever.
Before you learn the tender grace of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white jacket
has died by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was human
before his body became a pair of shoes
and the sky people would step into all day.

And you learned sadness at the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must make yourself sorrow.
You must speak and remember
someone who touched your life with sorrow
and you can the name of the dark.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that matters so hard from the world
you know.
Kindness before ignorance, before cruelty
before boats leave and pardons break,
only kindness that remains in hand from the sound
of the fist.
Kindness before wishing you were better.
Before anything hardens inside you.
to say it is to realize how little gifts
and how you must give every minute like a thief
starved for bread.

* * *

THIS poem just says it for me. While this year seems to refuse to go quietly into the night, I know that each one of us can put an end to some suffering. I am learning to stop cursing the darkness and light a candle instead of being tenuous and roundabout and realizing that there is something I can do.

I suppose nothing extreme except to open our hearts to the hurt and pain of others, to other people, in fact, due to the vest of humanity which, I am very sure, is also part of ourselves we just have to name. Where they are, the events of the past year have shown us, but also what we are capable of. Because we do recognize ourselves in them, and there in us.

Years ago, I became a camp for the Red Cross and is hard when I was volunteering there that *I am a part of every living being in the world. I am everyone, and everyone is I.* Think and every one is part of your big family.

The cliche that it becomes

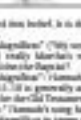
There is just one time in which stones on each and everyone

There is only us, all of us are one

We stand before one of mankind's most dramatic opportunities to understand and appreciate ourselves. I know I am you and everyone else! I am thinking because I am just so humbled to get a fleeting glimpse of this great Truth which seems so ridiculously obvious. Each of us, if we just listen, already knows what to do.

A Message of Hope (II)

Sense and Sensibility



Ramón L. Bautista

Q. Since there's famous "Magdalene" ("My soul doth magnify the Lord...") really Mariah's response to the conception of John the Baptist?

A. A few years ago for the "Magnificat," Mariah's song of praise in Chapter 2:1-20 is generally accepted by biblical scholars to be Old Testament source of Luke's "Magnificat." Hannah's song has the character of a hymn of praise in the form of utterance, flare and motive..." Sir Isaac Asaks, etc." However, as Stephen Farris points out, the "Magnificat" is laden with other allusions from the Old Testament. Thus, the "Magnificat" is also one of the Old Testament songs that are same language. For example, in Psalm 35:9-7, "I magnify the Lord with me..." and Psalm 34:1-3, "You deliver the soul from the oppressive..." Also the song of Judith 16:1-17 "Begin a song..." Because the Lord almighty has hailed them by the hand of a woman ... Then the oppressed people shouted, my weak people raised me, and the enemy were terrified" and in Daniel 3:51-90. Thus, I can't say I can't for the women will call me happy..."

There is a debate on whether the "Magnificat" should be attributed to Mary or Elizabeth. However, Farris argues that the "Magnificat" is Mary's song. It fits her more comfortably as a song of Mary... a position extensively defended by R. Brown.

Farris contends with Cantori and Fitzmeyer that although the hymn is based on Old Testament sources, its praises from can be attributed to a Jewish-Christian community.

"What's more written in the original, therefore, the "Magnificat" takes on a special role. Some interpreters have captured the presence of Jesus-Mary as a substitute's mediator and as a result in the Jesus-Mary as a substitute's mediator and as a result in the Jesus-Mary as a substitute's mediator and as a result in the

A prayer of thanks

LORD, we come to You today with hearts full of thanks, for bring with us the past 366 days of the year 2004. We kneel and bow down before You and praise Your living name. We acknowledge You as the Way Of Life, The Truth, Savior, All Human, The Savior Of The World, our ever-forgiving and merciful Father.

Lord, grant us the grace of a deeply repentant heart. Forgive us for all the times that we have been so proud and stubborn, for the things we have said and done which may have hurt others, for doing the things which were not in accordance with Your teachings. Pardon us, Lord, for all our sins and shortcomings.

Lord, we thank You for good health, good friends, good siblings, good chance, for all the talents that You've shown for us, with the Holy Spirit as our guide.

Lord, we ask for Your blessings and graces as we continue with life's many journeys. We offer to You our children. Guide them in their daily activities. We offer to You ourselves as a couple. Let there always be love, peace and harmony in our home. Let there be mental peace. Help us to never overpass hurts and humanity. Remind us always to do good in this life that You've given us.

Lord, for all the things that we have failed to mention here, please accept our acclamation and contrition, thanks and supplication. In all these, Lord, always remind us of Your love, and from that love, help us to build and live this valid life in our hearts and minds. Help us to start the new year right, with You as the center of our lives today, tomorrow and the coming days of the year 2005. All these we ask in the mighty name of Jesus and God's holy Spirit. Amen.

—MARY L. FE, M.D., Cebu City

LETTERS

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati; or send a fax to this: 897-1703, 897-1701, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers (letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Disgusting sympathizers

I FEEL disgusted (or reading in the Inquirer, Dec. 31, issue, a news item on the travelling by diehard fans of Fernando Poe Jr. of the remains sent by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The night before, I saw on TV (6:30) him blaming the President for FPJ's death. Earlier, Mr. Soriano had made some statements to play FPJ for last respects. According to the media, FPJ's political leaders experienced saying their duties. Know the reaction of FPJ supporters. Mr. Arroyo approached FPJ's close relatives, but they too were as ambivalent on the matter.

I asked myself as to what happened to the Filipinos' admiration and sense of values? I think when the FPJ diehards did stands of hard time.

Imagine the highest Filipino official of the land being rebuffed by FPJ's political allies and then by his family.

What kind of leaders are FPJ's political allies if they esteem service their followers? As for FPJ's relatives, their simple lack social graces. FPJ's political allies and close relatives need some education on social sensitivity.

What was done to Mr. Arroyo was an impropriety and a show of arrogance, it was an insult to the majority of Filipinos who viewed her to protest.

Understandably, Metro Manila is not the whole Philippines. Certainly, there were people in the Visayas and Mindanao and other in Luzon who did not approve of what was done to President Arroyo.

—FRANCISCO V. FULLO, 4-South 1st St., Angeles Village, Tabun, Las Piñas City

As private citizen, FPJ larger than our political leaders

Isabel Sr. David's column, "The Incident FPJ," was a well-written salient to a man who shared most of us. He with the undisputed. (PDI, 12/26/04)

While I'm not a fan of Fernando Poe Jr., it saddened me to hear about his death. It was a great loss, but then again, he had already served his purpose on earth. His good works will live among us for eternity.

God has set ailment justice so please his good name. We could have been cheated, but it actually turned him lower because, as equal voters, his works for the poor made a far greater impact and meaning—they could not have been said to be potentially instrumental—than they would have had if he were the leader of the nation. He could touch out to the poor without the trappings of class. Unlike the so-called "public servants."

—JANICE WOO, bwoo@shentel.com

Di mo na kailangang tumalon ngayong Bagong Taon.

Happy New Year mula sa Growee, your child's growth vitamins.

Fresh faces in the Cabinet, why not?

I ADMIRE Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's decision to appoint Undersecretary Alberto Agra as Bureau of Internal Revenue commissioner. Agra is a young, dynamic and competent lawyer who will surely bring in fresh ideas to the BIR. He is also a graduate of the prestigious Ateneo de Manila University.

I am also happy with the appointment of Undersecretary Ramon Jesus P. Paje as Department of Environment and Natural Resources secretary. Paje is a young, idealistic and competent lawyer who will surely bring in fresh ideas to the DEN

Across the NATION

Mining execs say bauxite deposit big in E. Visayas

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The revitalization of the mining industry in the country was embraced wholly by officials of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Eastern Visayas, saying this would pave the way for the recovery and the region getting out of its economic woes.

Lauro Alfonso, regional MGB chief, said that Eastern Visayas, being one of the country's richest regions in terms of mineral resources, would greatly benefit from the recent decision of the Supreme Court to open up mining operations in the country to foreign companies.

Alfonso said that the region's huge bauxite deposit alone would be more than enough to help improve the country's financial condition.

Based on an old study, in Samar province alone, there is a big bauxite deposit that is worth P24 billion, a big amount that is more than enough for the government to get out itself of its present fiscal problems and even give some of our debts," Alfonso told the Inquirer.

Alfonso said that there are 698,240,824 tons of bauxite deposits that are spread in 194,000 hectares found on Samar Island waiting to be explored.

Aside from bauxite, which is used in the production of aluminum mining other major ores, Eastern Visayas is also rich in other mineral resources like gold, copper, chromite and coal.

There are at least 23 pending applications for the exploration of bauxite and other mineral resources in the region, Alfonso revealed.

At present, there are two existing mining operations in the region. One is on Homonhon Island, in Guiuan, Eastern Samar and the other in Palompon, Leyte.

The Heritage Mining Corp. is engaged in chromite mining in Homonhon while the Philippine Refinery Corp. is quarrying limestone in Palompon.

Aware of the opposition to mining operations by environmentalist and Catholic-backed groups in Samar, Alfonso said that while he respected their opinions, their interest remains to be explored and used for the benefit of the greater number of people.

"We really have to consider other options. If reserving the environment and conducting a mining operation could co-exist," he said.

But the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)-Eastern Visayas decried this move to open up mining operations in the country even to foreign mining companies.

Roy Tendero, regional secretary general of the FDC, said that mining operations would only result to environmental destruction.

"Just like logging activity, mining ... is also one of the reasons for the destruction of our environment. If the government would indeed push (for) the revitalization of the mining industry, at least it must be regulated and all proper measures should be put into place to avoid destruction of our environment," Tendero said.

Study says animals may detect earthquakes before they happen

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Anxious about when the next earthquake and the resulting tsunami may hit you? Maybe it's time to get out of your couch and off your TV set and observe closely your dogs, chickens and even the pesky cockroaches.

Reports in Sri Lanka, where more than 22,000 people died from the earthquake-triggered tsunami last week, and wildlife officials noticed that only a few animals died from the disaster.

Reports also said that in the Yala Wildlife Preserve in southern Sri Lanka where the tsunami hit, scientists noticed no dead wild animals among the debris.

This brought up old stories that animals can sense impending earthquakes.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) actually made a scientific report to investigate this phenomenon right after the July 1990 earthquake hit Baguio and other parts of Northern and Central Luzon.

In one Phivolcs' March 1991 fact finding dogs, chickens refusing to leave roosting and cockroaches, for multiplier effect, in that they would be scrutinized and be more observant of animal behavior and learn to observe those forms which presage tectonic earthquakes," the report said.

It said dogs are most likely to show symptoms of earthquakes.

"Being ubiquitous, overt and the best understood, owners are apt to take notice if activity deviates from baseline, normal level," the report said.

It said dogs, especially the old-er ones, whined, jumped cruelly, scratched the floor or ground and refused to eat. Many said their dogs were barking incessantly before the earthquakes.

Chickens refused to come down from the roosting area if it was any one source. Cockroach swarms or cockroaches leaving the house and scampering in several directions were also observed.

An instance of fish kill was also noted. Large animals like cattle and pigs were restless and tried to leave their pens when cooped, the report said.

IT'S THE year of the rooster and this restaurant in Baguio tries to catch attention by displaying models of the animals in its chairs. Research made by scientists also shows that roosters may be used as harbingers of disaster. TOTO CABRANES/INQUIRER

The scientists said the animals' unusual behavior were noticeable a week before the earthquake struck, then it was back to normal until July 16 when the abnormal behaviors were again evident.

"The first observations start with a high frequency or seven days before the earthquake. This is followed by a drop in known frequencies until the fifth day before, then surges on two days before until it reaches the peak level on the day of the earthquake," the report said.

"The most numerous reports build up to one to two hours before the main shock," it added.

The animals were noticeable in their barking a few hours before 3 p.m. (daylight saving time) of July 16 when the earthquake struck, the report said.

The Phivolcs study is tied to bird watchers with the study made on the 1976 Tangshan quake in northeastern China where over 240,000 people died.

People there also observed thousands of chickens refusing to eat for a week as well as goldfishes trying to jump out of their bowls.

Phivolcs cited the case of Fu-cousin Hsiu of Xikil, Wuwei Hsiju. Then 70 years old, Hsiu said his chickens and pigs were restless for a week before the earthquake. He said his homebound cats refused to enter his house four days before the quake.

Shelton Martin of Palaeco City in Wuwei Hsiju also said her dog howled for seven consecutive nights and her chickens became restless for only 18 days prior.

"If this prognostic technique is tested in rural villages and small isolated areas, the judgmental rank of earthquake prediction becomes also the responsibility of residents of these communities. This leaves the tasks of evaluation, research, dissemination of prediction techniques to the Phivolcs, the country's highest authority on volcanoes and earthquakes," the report said.

In non-technical terms, it means that all Filipinos should do their jobs and report their conjecting animals to the nearest weather station.

DAY FADES!
Sunset in Lucban signals the end of another year and the start of a new one as it paints a picturesque scene.

Fruit prices go up as New Year gets near

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Filipino tradition of succeeding 12 round fruits for good luck and prosperity during the New Year's Eve media noche seemed harder to follow soon.

At the public market in this capital city of Pampanga, the prices of fruits had gone up between 10 and 20 percent on Thursday, said vendor Florencia Tergara.

The 76-year-old Tergara, who has maintained a small stall of fruits and dried fish in the last 60 years, said sales had not been brisk.

"People don't have much money nowadays," she said.

Per kilogram, mabolo costs for P20; star apple, P20; chico, P90; apple mango, P25; chesa, P20; dalanghita, P15; papaya, P30; chermoya, P150; pomelo, P80; grapes, P80; and guyabano, P150.

A small pineapple costs P25 each while a Fuji apple costs P35. Bonkan oranges sold for P20 apiece while watermelon went for P90 each.

Vendor Ned Manguine said his regular customers were buying only a piece of each fruit.

"It used to be that they buy by kilograms or get several pieces to complete the collection. Ngayon pinakuha na lang [Now, they buy a piece of each fruit]," he said.

Gloria Garcia, a mother of six, bought only a piece each of 12 different fruits on Thursday.

"This is just enough to follow the tradition," she said.

Vendor Dina Mallari said others are coping with high prices by including other things round like sigarilyas (string beans) and tomatoes.

Chelsea designer Dong Macapagal also believes in the media noche tradition. It's important to follow the tradition because it's a practice taught to us by our elders," he said.

But Mallari, good luck does not start and end with fruits. "It also depends on hard work," she said.

Prices of basic commodities have increased following a review of increases in the prices of oil products.

But the local firecracker industry is reeling from a drop in prices as a result of what firecracker traders said was rampant smuggling of firecrackers from China.

The Chinese firecrackers find their way to Manila and are sold cheaper because they enter the country without the payment of duties and taxes.

The smuggling, according to many traders, is forcing them to bring down prices to just one after in the industry. Rosario Orejan, PDI Central Luzon Desk

More Cordillera militiamen seeking Army posts

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Why go through all the trouble of planting a spear tree?

Some military officials asked this point on Tuesday when President Macapagal-Arroyo met again with the widow and the former vice-chief-of-staff-turned-rebel Gen. Rodolfo Biazon, leaders of the Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA), officials present in the meeting said.

Mayor Rosalio Tabanos, co-chair of the Cordillera Regional Peace and Order Council, said the military and government officials told Governor Carmel Bulwing and Mayor Mallod Molitas of Bontoc, Mtns, that they are still concerned about the factionalism that continues to plague the CPLA, particularly after its last Bulwing.

Bulwing was killed in his Alma Immediately after the slaying, Molitas and Tabanos, who were then provincial administrator, were tagged by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as the masterminds behind the killing.

The president joined Administrative Order 18 in 2001 directing the military to recruit, train and disarm 120 CPLA militiamen, and to integrate the rest in to mainstream society.

Former Sergeant Gov. Raul Molintas, former chair of the Cordillera PDOC, said the issue of integration was to discuss the militia. But the latest PDOC report showed that the CPLA continued to retain as a distinct armed force.

Abu said some of Bulwing's supporters had been petitioning the government to increase the militias recruitment quota that the President had lifted up with former rebels and militiamen.

But that quota has not increased due to the budget deficit, Abu said. He said extending this benefit was not likely.

"The problem was, at the start, some (militiamen) were not respecting how that they are the military's investigation program is working, many want to join," he said.

James Dawsang led a third breakaway force against Bulwing but he is now a military officer due to the integration program, the RPOC report said.

"But the quota is too small, so we cannot accommodate everybody. It is too late for them (the new protestants) to join," Abu said.

The militiamen have been making a last-ditch effort to persuade Ms Arroyo that expanding the integration quota will benefit the country, he said.

Police officials met with Carmel Bulwing, Mallona, Gadangan Dis. President) Mayor Cebino Cangginngan, one of Bulwing's former lieutenants, and Macedonio Bahatan, Bulwing's former confidante who now supervises over the CPLA political arm, the Cordillera Bulwing Administration.

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INQUIRER Visayas
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Senior Chief Editor Jo L. Benedicto

Poor Samareños build road, no thanks to gov't

By Joey A. Gablota
Villareal, Samar

TIRED of unfulfilled promises of top government leaders, people in the impoverished town of Villareal in Samar initiated what could be a first in the country: construct an 8-km cemented road in the "bayanihan" spirit of volunteerism.

Since Nov. 13, they have taken it upon themselves to construct the 57-year-old stretch of dirt road linking their town to the rest of the province. Villareal (pop.: 59,000), which means "real ville" in Spanish, is more than 100 years old and one of the oldest in Eastern Visayas.

The "Villareal Republican Road Project" involves building a two-lane road covering seven barangays—Mauayan, 1501, Nagkalubha, Mabitang Cantutilay, Libtong and San Fernando.

The residents first constructed the road in San Fernando. When this writer visited the area on the first week of December, 1,200 meters of the stretch had already been cemented.

"This is our long cherished dream: to have a paved road leading to the town proper," said the town's mayor, neophyte politician Fercain la Torre. Cemented streets are found only in the town center.

Once the program is completed, "the delivery of our produce would now be easier," the mayor said. "Our farmers and fishermen would gain [the] most ... [Transit time] would be cut considerably.... [T]heir produce would remain fresh.... when [it] reaches the market."

Farming and fishing are the main sources of livelihood of the people, with Catbalogan, the provincial capital, and Tacloban City, the regional capital, as main markets, La Torre said. Villareal is 35 km from Catbalogan and 80 km from Tacloban.

The 40-year-old mayor is also optimistic that the paved road will open economic opportunities for the town.

Labor of love

He said his constituents had grown tired of the promises made by provincial leaders to cement the only access road connecting the town to other areas of Samar. Then, when he disclosed the plan to them, they immediately supported it, he added.

La Torre said the dirt road was built in 1957, during the time of Rep. Fausto Antoma. Incidentally, the mayor belongs to this clan.

"Leaders and the people of this town had asked several times from the provincial and even city national leaders for funding but to no avail," he said.

Among the national leaders they had approached was then Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. She, too, failed them, La Torre cited.

"She was once a visitor of our town. She even claimed the surfs during her visit," referring to the native dance in the Leyte-Samar area.

Work assignments

On Nov. 13, men, women and children began work on the road. La Torre said they worked from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every Saturdays. A work day has been assigned to each of the town's 28 barangays.

On Saturdays, La Torre said, more than 20 persons could be seen doing different tasks. The mayor could often be seen at the site, hefting and raking cement like his other townmates.

Dr. Cornelio Solis, a native of Villareal who is working as municipal health officer of nearby Jiabong, said he was proud to be part of the endeavor.

"This is for all of us. I'm proud to be a Villareñon. With this project, we can prove that we can work as one and be united," Solis said, translating all of his task of raking cement with gravel and sand every Saturday, his rest day from his regular job.

MEN, women and even children of Villareal town in Samar work together in "bayanihan" fashion to cement an 8-km dirt road leading to the town proper.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. CORNELIO SOLIS

The physician also leads the campaign for donations.

Rosita Bautista, 57, does her own share. "I help in giving drinking water to city workers. I also help in sowing them food," she said.

Her son, Jose, 37, is also one of the volunteers. "I am just glad to give up service to this kind of endeavor. This is for our benefit, anyway," said Jose.

Noah Figueroa, the municipal health officer, did not think twice in rendering service for the project on Saturdays. "This is for all of us, including the next generations of Villareal," he said.

La Torre estimated that their "labor of love" could be finished anytime next year.

Donors

"We are dependent on city donors. If the donors would contribute in some city way, we could finish this project probably by next year," La Torre said.

He said the local government unit's contribution was providing equipment, such as a bulldozer and a cement mixer.

A contractor, who hails from this town, pledged to provide bags of cement, sand and gravel.

Since they started their campaign, the donors have kept coming, La Torre said. As of latest count, more than P300,000 had been received by the project committee, mostly contributed by natives of the town who now work and reside in other places.

Some of the donors come from as far as the United States, Canada and Norway.

"There was even one of the prospective donors, who obviously was skeptical and sent a member of his family to really see if our campaign was for real," La Torre said. Satisfied with what the emissary learned, "he (the prospective donor) gave a sizeable amount and even promised to donate more."

Lower costs

The mayor said the based on old estimates by engineers of the Department of Public Works and Highways, the cost of constructing the 8-km road would be P80 million, or P10 million for every kilometer.

This is forty times bigger than the annual income of Villareal, he said. Every year, he pointed out, the town gets an average of only P23 million as its share in internal revenue allotment (IRA) from the national government and about P1 million in local taxes.

La Torre admitted that the "too huge" amount was another reason why past provincial administrations and even representatives of the congressional district to which the town belongs did not make any effort to cement the road.

Through the bayanihan system, the project would cost only less than P12 million, La Torre said. "That is the amount that we only need for us to have a standard (cemented) road," he said. A standard road has eight inches thick of cement and 25 meters wide.

No 'SOP'

Aside from being free of labor cost, the project is also "SOP-free," La Torre said.

"No (government) officials would be receiving any amount of money out of this project. There would be no SOP here," he said, referring to "standard operating procedures" involving government transactions or project wherein a certain amount is set aside for government officials, like mayors and even barangay leaders.

La Torre, who is serving his first term, said that with his townmates shunning the almost forgotten spirit of solidarity long among Filipinos and even with city assistance from the provincial and national governments, they could realize their "old cherished dream."

"Every Villareñon had dream to see that one day this dusty and long stretch of road would be cemented. And now, our dream is becoming a reality. This is a collective effort; each of us has his own share of this project. We will take care of this as the next generation would also enjoy our labor of love," La Torre said with so much pride.

Missing seaman's last trip, lasting gift

By Chito A. Fuentes
Tagbilaran City

CARLOS Santiago had declared it would be his last contract on a foreign vessel. As events turned out, it would be his last trip anywhere.

Like many Filipinos entertaining hopes of a better life, Santiago decided to embrace the life of a seaman. Although raised in the farming town of Talibog, Bohikhon, he felt that foreign income dangled the ticket to a better future for his family.

Talibog, 45, finished his nautical course at the Philippine Maritime Institute-College, toiled and started his own family in 1986, he got his first overseas contract.

Although stories abound of overseas workers finding marital, Nora said she had no such problems with Carlos. "He was the perfect husband for me," she recalled.

Nora explained the reasons: Carlos had no vices and didn't smoke, drink alcohol or gamble.

During the times he was home, Carlos only had his two children as kumpadi (gang mates). "Carlos drove me to and from work when he was home," Nora proudly declared.

Nora works as cashier of the PMI-College in Tagbilaran City where they met and fell in love.

For a while, it seemed like life was running smoothly in the Santiago home. The couple's eldest child, Michelle Rose, 21, just passed the board exams and is now a registered nurse. The youngest of the two siblings, Philip Cesar, 19, initially took up engineering but shifted to nautical, hoping to follow in his father's footsteps.

"Carlos said he would take one last contract and then he would opt for good," Nora said.

It was not difficult to understand his decision. Life at sea, away from one's family for months, had taken their toll on a home body like Carlos.

Nora said he would also down each time he went on his contract assignments. Like many dollar-earning jobs, work on foreign vessels is no pleasure cruise.

With his daughter now looking forward to working in the United States, and with his son's education virtually assured by an educational plan and the privileges that come with Nora's job in the national school where he is studying, Carlos could afford to wear the load on his shoulders.

"He had mentioned about his desire to go farming," Nora said. It was not a struggle-life for a man who grew in the predominantly agricultural town of Talibog.

Nora said Carlos was not able to leave until next year. He went to Manila to prepare his documents in case the agency would call him up for posting. As fate would have it however, the seaman lined up for the job on the freighter Sulendang Ayu failed to show up and Carlos was called to fill in.

When Carlos left for Singapore on Oct. 24, Nora said she braced herself for the 10-month contract knowing he won't be hearing her again anymore.

Call

About 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 8, Nora received a call from a woman who told her she was the secretary of the Great Southern Maritime Agency which hauled Carlos's trip.

She gave the phone to a man who introduced himself as engineer Ruben Quiñeles, the agency's crewing manager. Nora said Quiñeles told her Carlos's ship ran into rough seas on Alaskan waters but all the ships are doing everything they could.

Quiñeles rang her up several times at intervals of five to 10 minutes and Nora initially thought something was fishy there before the man told her to stay calm. Nora felt no fear because her officemates assured her it could be a gang preying on the wives of seamen.

"I was skeptical with the frequency of the calls and it was only later that I learned that Carlos was the only Filipino among the six missing crewmen," Nora said.

Carlos was among the crew members of the Sulendang Ayu, a 7,316-foot Malaysian-flagged freighter, who were reported missing after a US Coast Guard helicopter crashed into the freighting sea in Alaska. The aircraft earlier plucked the remaining crew members from the Malaysian vessel that had been drifting in the Alaskan waters for 12 hours due to engine trouble.

The helicopter was meeting the last of the stranded crew members of the stricken Sulendang Ayu when it crashed, according to a Reuter report. The ship, which was carrying soybeans, was later reported to have split into two, the report added.

Hint of danger

When she arrived home from work, the first hint of danger hit her when she found out that the mobile phone number that the agency secretary gave her matched those on her phone book, which she didn't bring with her to the office.

Later that night, Carlos's younger brother called her up and told her the accident involving the Sulendang Ayu was reported by CNN.

While she could sense fear building up within her, Nora said she continued to entertain hopes that Carlos would survive. Deep inside, however, Nora knew hopes were dim considering that a man can only last as long as three hours in the icy ocean waters.

When the search was discontinued, Nora said she cried a lot. Carlos was a faithful husband and good father and Nora said she was hoping he would be rewarded with a time to sit back and relax over the fruits of his labors.

"More than that, there is the unbelievable longing to see him, his body at least," she said.

When this writer visited the Santiago home, Christmas was due in a few days but there was not much hint of gloom in the Santiago home however. Christmas lights flickered on the Christmas tree and outside the home.

"I have started to accept that God has taken him and I am sure he is now safe in God's hands," Nora said.

Supportive

It helped, too, that family and friends were supportive of her. Since the night when she was first told of the news that Carlos's ship had sunk, her closest kin and church pastors at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in Tagbilaran constantly prayed for her and her family.

Unlike many people who take a long time to get over the death of their loved ones, Nora was composed when she agreed to be interviewed for the first time. She also did not seem afraid of the future and has not even discussed the financial benefits she has, even though Carlos's agency has been asking her if she needed immediate assistance.

Asked if there were any premonitions that Carlos would not be returning, Nora hesitated for a long time. There were no dreams, no words hinting of goodbye, no tinge of sadness when he left their home in Upmost, Ubujan district for the last time.

"There is only one thing I can think of," Nora said.

When they went to Manila on Dec. 13, Quiñeles asked to see Nora, the nickname of the couple's only son.

"[Quiñeles] told me if the son could take his place when he finished his studies so I will have one," Nora recalled Quiñeles telling him. Nora is still a freshman and Nora found it strange for Carlos to prepare for his son's placement this early. As unending events showed, he did not have much time left.

Just before he went missing on the frosty seas of Alaska, Carlos had given his son a lasting Christmas gift: his future employment.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

RP needs tighter monetary policy, says ADB

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank sees the need for tighter monetary policy in the Philippines and in many other countries in East Asia this year as inflation continues to rise across the region.

In its December issue of Asia Economic Monitor, the ADB said the economic outlook for the Philippines, People's Republic of China, Indonesia and certain smaller countries, including Lao People's Democratic Republic and Vietnam, appeared to require monetary tightening.

It noted that in the Philippines, with both headline and core inflation rates hovering above 7 percent or much higher than the official target of 4-5 percent, the tightening of monetary policy was needed.

The report also cited that in China, given the trend in rates of investment and economic growth, the authorities implemented a series of administrative measures to control bank credit and money supply growth.

East Asia is defined as the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus China and the Republic of Korea.

"With the exception of Malaysia and Thailand, and to a lesser extent Korea, monetary policy needs to be tightened, with inflation edging up almost across the region," the ADB said.

"In some of these economies, weak external payments positions also underscore the need for tighter monetary policies," it said.

In Malaysia, where underlying inflationary pressures remain modest and external payments position was strong, the report said there might not be a compelling reason to tighten monetary policy.

The ADB said Thailand, for its part, had tightened its monetary policy by raising interest rates in recent months as headline inflation slowly moved up. However, it said the core inflation of about 0.5 percent was well below the 3.5 percent upper limit of the official inflation target.

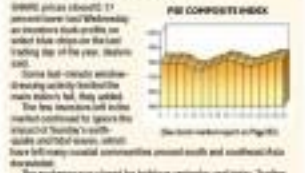
"Coupled with a flexible exchange rate regime, this suggests that Thailand need not necessarily tighten monetary policy further, even as US interest rates go up, unless core inflation rises sharply," it said.

In Korea, the report noted that the core inflation of about 3 percent in November was at the mid-point of the central bank's 2.5-3.5 percent target range, requiring monetary policy to be neither tightened or kept neutral. "However, weak demand or demand and slowing GDP growth supports the case for an accommodative monetary policy stance. Striking a balance between these conflicting demands is a challenge," the bank said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has avoided any form of monetary tightening since February 2004, saying that inflationary pressures were easing from the supply rather than demand side.

Demand pressures come in when consumers decide to spend more, usually when they lose the incentive to keep their money in savings instruments due to low interest rates.

In BSP list kept in key policy interest rate unchanged at 6.75 percent for the overnight borrowing or repurchase rate since July last year.



MIAA raising P700M for Naia 3 cargo terminal, access road

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MANILA International Airport Authority is raising at least P700 million to put up an access road to and a cargo terminal within the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

MIAA general manager Alfonso Cusi said the facilities that were necessary to convince new airlines to move to Naia 3 would have to be in place by the first quarter of 2006.

The Asian airlines Cusi said it would open Naia 3 for commercial operations within the first half of 2005. Some six MIAA operators the Naia international and domestic terminals.

Cusi said the agency would use its own funds to build a P300-million access road through the Ninoy Aquino complex. This would facilitate the movement of passengers and cargo from the existing terminal to Naia 3. It should be completed by the middle of 2005.

The cargo terminal component was estimated to cost P500 million. He said MIAA intended to raise funds for this through bank borrowings or bond issuance.

Another option, he said, was to tap the private sector to build the cargo terminal under the build-operate-transfer scheme.

"We are starting to make plans to build a modern cargo terminal in Naia 3 to accommodate more volume. We are still finalizing the numbers but although, it may cost about P600 million," said the MIAA chief in an interview.

Philippine Airlines said the switch to Naia 3 cargo terminal in Naia 3 might continue it to mean all its operations from Naia 2 to the new facility. The flag carrier said the government should also keep aviation fees unchanged.

The new terminal would need the consent of the country's biggest airlines to be viable. But it may also raise airline fees.

PAL operates 32 aircraft for its

Transco sees sale of assets to Aboitiz, Meralco

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Transmission Corp. (Transco) expects to sell some P750 million worth of subtransmission assets this year to the Aboitiz group and to the Lopezes' Manila Electric Co.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Orbe said the Aboitiz group was eyeing the wholesale acquisition of the sub-transmission assets within the franchise areas of its power utility firms, such as Visayan Electric Corp. and Davao Light Corp.

These assets were estimated to be worth P250 million, he said.

"I've already met with Vitas, Davao Electric and the Aboitizes. We're now just discussing some technical considerations," he told reporters.

ORTIZ

Apart from the prospective sale to the Aboitiz group, he said Transco was expecting to sell another P500-million worth of sub-transmission assets to Meralco.

He said Transco and Meralco had agreed to start negotiations for the asset sale within the first week of January.

"We're ready to discuss the terms with Meralco. They've already indicated what lines they wanted to get, but they still have to submit a formal acquisition program to Jamong," he added.

As for the payment terms, he said Transco was considering Meralco's better financial condition, in light of the recent refinancing of some P220 million worth of loans.

Meralco is seeking a deferred payment scheme for the sub-transmission assets.

Orbe said Meralco had yet to indicate the terms it would want for the payment scheme.

But for such a big purchase, he said Transco was willing to consider the asset sale to Meralco a "special case."

Transco plans to fully divest its ownership of 7,347 circuit kilometers of 69-kV lines by 2006.

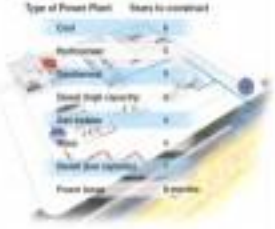
So far, Transco has sold P880 million worth of sub-transmission assets to various electric cooperatives all over the country.

The latest loan purchase agreement that Transco signed were with the Negros Occidental Electric Cooperative Inc. and the Bohol I Electric Cooperative Inc. for more than P55 million worth of sub-transmission assets in the Visayas.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Years to construct power plants



Source: Meralco Power Development Plan, 2004-2013

Government expects 2,122 megawatts of additional power capacity will be needed from 2004 to 2013. Though there is no capacity shortage in 2004, capacity tightens considerably in Mindanao where the load is growing by double digits. Power outages and their high costs to businesses have hit the country's growing demand.

Marinel D. Tomas, INQ Research

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BCDA, John Hay developer open to new lease deal

ANGELES CITY—The developer of Camp John Hay has offered to return a portion of its leased property in the former American base to the government to address a dispute that has been plaguing the operations for three years now.

Robert John Sobrepeña, president of Pil Estate and the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevcor), and Rufino Corvera, Development Authority Clark Disability Bupa Jr. had agreed here on Tuesday to negotiate a new lease contract now week, according to lawyer Lina Alvarez. CJHDevcor senior vice president for legal affairs.

The new lease contract should involve CJHDevcor's back monies worth P1 billion, company officials said.

The current contract covers 296 hectares of Camp John Hay's built-up portion, but the developer has so far used only 16 hectares since 1996, a top CJHDevcor official said.

A source from the John Hay Management Corp., the estate manager, said the reduced lease coverage would cut down the firm's rent by almost 60 percent.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon had threatened all of the developer's permits until he could get commitments from BCDA that the city's 20 percent share in the area would be released soon.

The John Hay debt problem was aggravated by a Supreme Court decision in October but year that voided a presidential directive granting tax benefits to

CAMP John Hay course

the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone.

Without the tax incentives, the debt and expenditures had soared higher than the firm's recorded capital investments and returns.

The tribunal annulled presidential proclamation 420, issued in 1994 by former President Fidel Ramos, which granted CJHDevcor tax incentives. The court said only Congress had the power to issue such benefits.

"Late last year, CJHDevcor refused its right to suspend payment of lease monies pending rectification by the BCDA of the legal breach of a material warranty under the lease agreement ... due to the OSG promulgation nullifying [our] tax privileges," Sobrepeña said in a press statement on Tuesday.

The decision also froze a recently initiated payment scheme that covered CJHDevcor's P6.1M lien back rental obligation covering fiscal years.

In the same press statement, Bupa assured CJHDevcor that "BCDA will honor its warranty set out in the [lease's] main and sharp recognition," which the PCIA-billion lease contract, signed on Oct. 19, 1996, guaranteed.

"But this will involve developing a new contract that deals with the new economic conditions and the legal factors affecting the estate," according to a BCDA source.

The suspended back rental agreement affects the government, the firm's sales revenues and civilian assets, including hotels, as collateral.

CJHDevcor invested P6 billion in build the 180-room Camp John Hay Manor, the 18-hole CAP John Hay Trails and Convention Center, the Camp John Hay golf course and various big homes.

CJHDevcor is preparing to open the 207-room John Hay Intercontinental and is about to start work on two inn and accommodation complex. Vincent Cabreza, PhilStarNews Luzon Bureau

RP faces credit card crisis, expert says

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES is vulnerable to a credit card crisis in view of the consumers' skyrocketing household bills and the over aggressive expansion campaign of credit card issuers, local bankers warned.

In an interview, Asia United Bank president Abraham Co expressed concern that the country might be nearing a credit card crisis as consumers were being burdened by the continued increase in commodity prices and utility rates.

As this happens, the consumers' purchasing power also shrinks, he said.

Co said credit card companies, for their part, were forced to be more aggressive in expanding their client base amid tough competition.

As more consumers were being lured into accumulating huge sums of money to build the infrastructure for the credit card business, Co said issuers should be more cautious in giving out credit cards to those that neither can afford to pay.

Currently, there are 4.5 million credit cards issued in the country and about two million cardholders, as each eligible borrower owns an average of two credit cards.

Co said the average credit lines were misleading consumers in special cases. Co said delinquency might further rise as household bills shoot up.

As such, he said Asia United Bank has not increased any credit lines or with other banks in expanding its consumer banking portfolio.

"We know where the situation of an growth is favorable," he said.

Another banker handling the consumer business, however, said a foreign bank agreed that more citizens might soon be hard-pressed in settling credit card bills once utility rates rise further.

But other bankers believe the credit card business will has room to grow and is moving toward more sophisticated services.

They added that the Philippines is not likely to replicate the credit card crisis that the country recently faced.

Aggressive credit card lending, however, is already taking its toll on the banking sector as past due accounts ballooned 16.5 percent in 2003 to P14.2 billion from a year ago, based on data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The combined credit card receivables of commercial banks and thrift banks stood at P59 billion during the period, which means that 24.2 percent or almost one-fourth of these banks' exposures to credit cards had fallen past due, versus the 19.9 percent ratio in 2002.

The high delinquency rate on credit cards is sending banks scrambling to higher fees charged by issuers and tougher collection methods, which drew flak from the public.

The BSP then, recently issued a circular requiring banks, their subsidiaries, affiliates and credit card issuers and collection agents, to refer to "reasonable" and "legally permissible" means to collect and refrain from "unscrupulous" acts.

It prohibited:

- the use or threat of violence or other criminal means to harm the physical person, reputation, or property of any person;
- the use of obscene, profane, or insulting language which amount to a criminal act or offense under applicable law;
- disclosure of the names of credit cardholders who allegedly refuse to pay debts, except to affiliated credit card companies;
- making contact at unreasonable hours or hours which shall be defined as contact before 6 a.m. or after 10 p.m., unless the account is past due for more than 60 days or the cardholder has given express permission or such times are the only reasonable or convenient opportunities for contact.

Memo to Secretary Abad

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Bienvenido C. Gerardo

NOTE as much time on my hands during the holidays, I browsed once a notebook of my granddaughter Trinity who is in Grade 2. The notebook was titled "*Si Rizal*" and subtitled "Filipino ... Pilipino Bangkotan nkasalita sa Bagong Siglo."

The title and subtitle were enough to arouse my curiosity.

The author is Envi V. Ballaros and the publisher is 20-20 Publishing and Printing House Inc.

The Foreword (Panimang Salita) opens with, "*Ang sarsuwa Binhi ng pinagsikapang maibimbing Batasan ng isang lawaan sa Deng mga mamamayan ng pinagsikapan ng mga mga mga ng pinagsikapan ng pinagsikapan ng pinagsikapan

Global economy to slow in '05; Asia to lead the way, WB says

NEW YORK—Buffeted by the soaring cost of oil, the world economy is expected to moderate in 2005, led by a slowing of the expansion in industrialized countries.

Spurred by China and India, developing countries should enjoy solid growth.

Predictions are that Asia will lead the global economic race—though Japan is facing a slowdown—and that the United States will still outrun Europe.

The World Bank sees global economic expansion slowing in 2005 to 3.2 percent, from an estimated 4 percent in 2004.

The global forecast considering to the slower pace include high and volatile oil prices that have cut into businesses—their tendency to demand in many countries—a decline in investment growth due to higher interest rates, and concerns about the burgeoning US trade and current account deficits.

But the global economy is slowing, but it will likely keep expanding on the basis of a recovery in the US and Chinese economies," Bank of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui said.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in its updated outlook in November, said oil prices have already taken their toll on the major economies, prompting it to cut its growth forecasts for 2005.

Across the OECD's membership of 28 industrialized countries, it expects growth of 2.5 percent next year, down from 3.4 percent forecast in May.

But the 32-nation euro area, the Bank-based global economic think tank reduced its forecast for economic expansion to 1.9 percent from the 2.4 percent it predicted last spring.

The OECD said persistently high oil prices and the rising euro were weighing on European exports to North America and Asia.

The organization still expected the United States to lead the global recovery, but it cut its growth forecast for 2005 to 3.3 percent from 3.7 percent. For Japan, it now forecasts growth of 1.1 percent down from 2.8 percent.

Although oil has fallen from its highs of $55 a barrel in October, the OECD said that increased global demand, especially from emerging economies like China, meant oil prices would stay well above 1990s levels for the long term.

The World Bank predicts developing countries this year will turn in the strongest economic performance since 1974, expanding by 6.1 percent.

The economic strength in the developing world is being led by China, which is predicted to achieve growth of 8.8 in 2004, and India with expansion projected at 6.6 percent.

"This year—2004—is shaping up to be the healthiest year for developing countries in the last three decades. East Asia has come out of the crisis of 1997-98 stronger and more vibrant than ever; the countries of Europe and Central Asia are now almost completely out of the long shadow of transition from socialism and are growing more rapidly; and South Asian economies, on the strength of continuing reforms, are performing well," World Bank chief economist Francois Bourguignon said.

In its "Global Economic Prospects 2005," the bank predicts developing nations would turn in growth rates of 5.4 percent in 2005.

Improvements in economic fundamentals should help boost economic growth per person in developing nations to an average of 2.8 percent per year between 2000 and 2015, the World Bank forecast, which would double the growth rate in the 1990s.

"Such growth would enable many developing countries to reduce the incidence of extreme poverty by 2015," it said.

In Asia, China's economic boom is expected to continue to power that expansion throughout the region.

By contrast, Japan's economy appeared headed for another slowdown, government data indicate. AP

SOUTH Korean stock brokers celebrate the last day of trading for 2004 at the stock exchange in Seoul on Thursday. South Korean share prices closed 1.32 percent higher as program buying pushed Samsung Electronics and other large caps higher and helped the benchmark index rise through the 800-point level, dealers said. The KOSPI index closed up 11.42 points or 105.32, off a high of 806.10 and a low of 685.45. AFP

Stocks top Asian fund managers' '05 shopping list

HONG KONG—Shares are overwhelmingly the investment choice of Asian fund managers for 2005, with Hong Kong their top pick for its strong consumer spending growth and pegged currency that keeps regional competitors, currency fears lessened.

The poll by Reuters and monthly investment magazine Benchmark showed utilities and telcos among the preferred stock sectors because they depend on domestic demand rather than exports suffering from a weak dollar.

The survey found that seven out of nine respondents preferred to hold stocks over the next three months and six of them over the next year, even as Asian bourses hit multi-year highs.

The only other investment choice named by respondents was real estate.

"We like the long-term Asia domestic growth story and think the next decade will be Asia's (or Asians," said Alex Boggie, director at Aberdeen International Fund Managers Ltd, Hong Kong.

MSCI's benchmark index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan hit its highest level in nearly five years on Wednesday.

Boggie said he preferred companies having long-term domestic growth rather than export-orientated firms.

Many export-led economies shivered this year as the dollar stumbled to record lows on fears the United States, the world's biggest economy, would struggle to fund its budget and current account deficits.

So while the Philippines, Korean and Taiwanese markets were among the least popular in the survey, Indonesia and China were favoured destinations for the next year because of their domestic market potential.

Hong Kong, where the benchmark Hang Seng Index has risen 13 percent in 2004 in its best levels in almost four years, was the favourite market for the first quarter.

Although China's drive to curb investment slowdown, its consumption will be robust and that spillover will keep Hong Kong humming next year," said Justin Saccal, head of Asian equity investments at ING Investment Management.

Over the next three months, four out of five Asian fund managers preferred Hong Kong, ten pitted for Hong Kong and India while Indonesia and India got one vote each.

For the next 12 months, three respondents preferred Indonesia, two respondents each liked Hong Kong and China while one chose India. Reuters

China set to dominate textile trade as export quotas lapse

DONGGUAN, China—Workers hunched over sewing machines at garment-maker Luen Thai's plant, about a 90-minute drive from Hong Kong, are divided into red, blue and green teams which compete to be the most efficient.

On this day they make Polo Ralph Lauren shirts, but Hong Kong-based Luen Thai also produces clothing for customers such as Abercrombie & Fitch and Liz Claiborne at plants in China, Cambodia, the Philippines and Tonga.

With decades-old quotas limiting textile exports from China and other countries set to lapse on Jan. 1, Luen Thai plans to double its workforce in Dongguan to more than 14,000 by 2007 in anticipation of a flood of demand for China-made apparel.

"Over the longer term ... the movement to China is an inevitable process," said Henry Tan, Luen Thai's chief executive.

The World Trade Organization expects that within three years, China's share of the world's textile and clothing market will rocket past 50 percent from 17 percent in 2003.

Already, plants across China are expanding, with more caps made coming in hopes of cashing in.

Even with quotas limiting shipments to WTO-member countries in place, China's clothing exports are rising fast.

In the first nine months of this year, China exported $13 billion in apparel and accessories, up 19 percent from the same period last year.

Exports of yarn and knitted fabrics jumped 26 percent to $22.61 billion.

Agnes's Chan, operator of the Jura chain that sources from China, Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka and elsewhere, plans to buy more from China once textile quotas are removed.

"In 2005, there may be an increase in the units that are buy from China and a decrease in the ratio that we buy from other Asian countries," said Richard Stein, managing director of Inditex Asia.

Inditex sources about 20 percent of its goods from Asia.

China exports trousers, shirts and other apparel as 55 percent below US producers' prices and 58 percent below the average in 10 exporting countries, figures from the US National Council of Textile Organizations show.

Despite greater access to China's cost-to-open markets, retailers such as Gap, Nike and Inditex are reluctant to put all their eggs in one basket given near-term uncertainties.

Exhaustive search project results in the United States, some of which buy from as many as 400 vendors in 50 countries, to consolidate their purchases among five to 10 countries by 2005.

To calm the fears of its trade partners, China announced tariffs on exports of 148 textile products starting on Jan. 1. Reuters

MIAA raising P700M ...

From page B1

domestic and international passenger and cargo routes. It has been using the relatively new Nia 1, exclusively to service passengers while all other carriers service Nia 1 or the oldest terminal.

PAL's cargo operations is based at old Terminal 1. While Nia 1 is designed to handle 20 aircraft at any given time and 12 million passengers a year, it has no cargo terminal and building one would take at least 18 months.

"While the cargo terminal is under construction, the airlines could use the access road to move cargo and passengers from the old terminals to Nia 1. They can still use the old cargo warehouse for the meantime," said Cusi.

The airport agency has been evaluating plans to raise the fees and charges following a three-decade pattern in order to adjust the rates.

Terminal fees may go up to about P600 for overseas trips and to P200 for domestic flights. Dr. Jay of Gal, the MIAA is studying proposals to impose a security fee and to start charging users for the use of trolleys.

US drug industry weathers horrid year

NEW YORK—The pharmaceutical industry endured a disastrous 2004, and the aftermath will linger into the new year.

Regulators at the Food and Drug Administration were already expected to take a more cautious approach about new drug approvals in the wake of Merck & Co.'s withdrawal from the market of its pain reliever Vioxx because it doubled patients' risk of heart attack and stroke.

Investors on the FDA increased at yearend when Pfizer Inc. announced that a study of its pain drug Celebrex showed it had similar problems at high doses.

The two products are in the same class of drugs, known as cox-2 inhibitors.

Questions still linger about whether Merck mounted negative news about Vioxx in order to keep selling the drug.

But the combination of problems with Vioxx and Celebrex is certain to raise more questions about the safety of the drugs sold in the United States.

Drug makers already are struggling with growing generic competition and lackluster prospects for new medicines now in the pipeline.

Some analysts believe further industry consolidation is likely because experts say reductions resulting from mergers may be the key to increasing earnings at a time when revenues are stagnating.

"This has been a tough year, largely of Bush/Cheney economics over marketing," said Dr. Catherine D. DeAngelis, editor in chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Besides the debacles at Merck and Pfizer, Chiron Corp. got a black eye earlier this year when products from the British plant, where it was to produce half the country's flu vaccines were blocked by safety officials.

Plus the industry was buffeted by revelations that drug companies had stifled negative clinical trial data from studies examining anti-depressant use in children.

Those woes came amid mounting anger over the price of prescription drugs and increasing demands for the importation of imported cheap drugs from Canada and Europe. AP

A BOTTLE of Vioxx, (below), is photographed next to a bottle of Pfizer's Celebrex in a pharmacy in New York. AP

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Pangsuying

Federal Land project seen to spur dev't in Marikina

By Charles E. Bukon

LAST month's commercial activation of Christmas lanterns and rivals lights (festive lighting) at a landscaped garden in Marikina comes as a symbolic measure for the city that intends to be a future global one.

Within the garden area, the Marcelbank Group, through its member Federal Land Inc., is scheduled to inaugurate the first phase of a P5-billion mixed-use development consistently involving a commercial center and medium-rise condominium development.

To be known as Marquinton (short for Marikina Town Center), the property is located on Sumulong Highway just in Tayuman-Marikina Boulevard and Sumulong Avenue in Marikina City.

Prime potential area

Marquinton is considered a prime potential area for commercial development and renowned businesses because of its proximity to the residential areas, hospital and sports complex.

"We welcome Marquinton to this city as Marikina citizens stand to benefit from its completion," said Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando.

The mayor revealed Marquinton agreed to have 30 percent of its manpower requirements from the city, which current household population estimated at 80,000.

Business, investment to surge

But apart from employment, Federal Land president Alfred Ty believes Marquinton will start a surge in the city's business and investment activities.

"The property lies within residential communities and institutional developments that gather large daytime populations like the city hall, sports complex and schools," Ty revealed.

The PETRON station at the Blue Wave at Marquinton Mall, which is the first phase of the development, is slated to soft-open this month.

Full operation by April

The rest of the mall which will feature four stores of the new cinemas, eatery of dining and entertainment outlets, specialty boutique shops, Tiaozone and leisure gaming areas, will be open for full operation by April of this year.

Marquinton will also offer modular commercial units with sizes ranging from 35 to 100 square meters.

"We will also include an excellent and friendly sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian ways within the area," revealed Ty.

Federal Land is also the developer behind well-known projects including Bay Gardens condominium, a luxurious residential community located on Roxas Boulevard, in front of Manila Bay; executive condominium Financial Gardens on Ortigas Center; former Gil Puyat Avenue; and the 1,000-sq m events hall Le Pavillon on Roxas Boulevard.

THE COMMERCIAL center component of Marquinton is expected to attract more investors in the city.

LPHI's ₱1M Metro Manila homes selling briskly

DEMAND for house-and-lot units in the P1 million price range and within the environs of Metro Manila appears to be picking up rewarding strong potential in this market segment.

Property developer LPHI recently experienced quick take-up rates for homes ranging from P950,000 to P1.3 million when it launched the 26-hectare Villa Santa Cecilia in Bamanbilan, Cavite, 15 minutes away from Alabang Town Center.

Sequel

Villa Santa Cecilia is a sequel to Sta. Cecilian Village located within the same area and offering similar house-and-lot packages. Sta. Cecilian Village, a 46-hectare property has sold quickly in the two years it has been in the market and is now on its last phase. Both are projects of the affordable housing arm of Ayala Land Inc.

Villa Santa Cecilia has three phases. Phase 1 and 2—with over 1000 house-and-lot units—are now available. Ginez Ibarra, project development officer of LPHI, expects Santa Cecilia to perform as solidly as its predecessor. So far, sales have been brisk. On the first day it was presented to the buyers, several units were immediately reserved.

Its accessibility to the well-developed Ayala alabang area and its location within commuting distance to business districts coupled with affordable pricing have made the development attractive to buyers.

"It is also a short's Green from Old Channel Gate and Robinsons La Bella Cavite and Metro South Medical Center," notes Ibarra. Moreover, there are churches nearby.

LPHI senior executives Manuel Calasca and Elena Bayangos recently launched Villa Sta. Cecilia in a elegant-breaking ceremony. Photo says constructing distance to most business centers, Villa Sta. Cecilia is a sequel to Sta. Cecilian, one of LPHI's fastest-selling developments.

3 model units

Prospective homeowners have the option to select from three model units—the 35-square-meter Sevilla house which sits on a 90-sq-m lot; the single-detached Padova model, also 35 sq m in floor area and occupying a 108 sq m lot; and the two-story single-detached Arezzo unit, with a floor area of 50 sq m on a 180 sq m lot.

The units may be purchased through in-house financing, Pag-ibig housing bank loan. In the latter's lots without any house on them will be available. The "lots only" option in Villa Santa Cecilia is being offered in response to many such requests from clients.

Like other LPHI developments, Villa Santa Cecilia will have a clubhouse, basketball court, children's playground, jogging trail and a commercial area. Land development of the first phase has started and is expected to be completed in six months. Homeowners can move in after one year.

Quality, speed

Villa Santa Cecilia units use a British technology building system called "Eco which makes use of precast parts that are placed together and assembled. It assures homeowners not only of quality but also speed in the construction of their units.

Although LPHI has an open house for prospective buyers on Sundays, interested homeowners can visit the LPHI sales office in Villa Santa Cecilia any time to ask for more information or view the model units. Inquiries are signed by Ecle and Associates.

For more information about Villa Santa Cecilia, please call 864-LPHI (5744).

Auto invasion in Sta. Rosa's Greenfield City

IF YOU think a breaking on to economic glory, Greenfield City, one of the country's narrowed-by property development projects, is primed to the influx of car manufacturing companies within its 65-hectare special economic zone declared as Greenfield Auto Park (GAP).

At present, 25 hectares of the GAP serve as a manufacturing facility for Ford Motor Philippines Inc., the world's second largest car company.

Strategic site

As one of the growing number of strategic sites to six sectorates that hosts Ford's plants, Greenfield City pursued to be an auspicious environment to handle assembly of popular vehicles such as Cielo Sedan and Escape SUV, along with Mazda3 and Mazda 3Maxx.

"Ranger Wed is the only car manufacturer in Greenfield City, its presence was sought to draw other companies to come to the fold. Foreign firms like Siemens Philippines Corp. and Automotive Interiors Corp., which are involved in producing Ford's automotive electrical circuits and lining interiors, are now enjoying proximity to their important client, at the same time, soothing themselves to servicing more customers as Greenfield City becomes increasingly viable to investors.

Growth-friendly home base

With location and investors accorded with PEZA incentives, GAP is proving to be a growth-friendly home base not only for well-known car manufacturers but also players in the automotive-related industries. It is also opening the way to lucrative opportunities such as the Greenfield Automall.

Greenfield Automall is a business-integrated automotive retail and commercial establishment dedicated to car dealership, car service and auto parts shop. It showcases with a driving school and

HYUNDAI AMCAR is one first to become part of Greenfield Automall.

The Premium Elastomeric Paint.

UNIVERSAL PAINT

FORD Motor Philippines' manufacturing facility covers 25 hectares of the Greenfield Auto Park.

themed cafés. Legazpi arrives in the Ferreira Bureau duty-free in Quezon City, Greenfield Automall is likely to create a car-strong car circus and enthusiasts, especially with the presence of Mitsubishi Asiana.

2 significant components

GAP and Greenfield Automall are two significant components of Greenfield City's master plan.

A residential project in the offing along with its bustling shopping and entertainment center, Greenfield City is poised to become a complete community that combines tranquil, relaxed environment with modern, high-tech business and commercial structures and facilities.

SuperCountdown

45 days 'til V-Day

Super

morning after

MANO PO cast seen through the lens of Andy Maluche

25 Super!stars for 2005

Christmas and a christening

Photography: TOM EPPERSON for METRO Magazine's Dec-Jan Body Issue Cover Star: KAT ALANO

Super!'s own MMFF Awards

By Pepe Diokno and James Gabrillo

	WHO WON	PEPE DIOKNO'S PICK	JAMES GABRILLO'S PICK
VISUAL EFFECTS			
MUSICAL SCORE			
SOUND RECORDING			
PRODUCTION DESIGN			
EDITING			
CINEMATOGRAPHY			
THEME SONG			
STORY			
MALE PERFORMER	ELLA GARCIA	ELLA GARCIA	ELLA GARCIA
SUPPORTING ACTOR			
SUPPORTING ACTRESS			
DIRECTOR			
ACTOR			
ACTRESS			
SCREENPLAY			
2ND BEST PICTURE			
BEST PICTURE			

BEST MOVIE OF 2004 AWARD - MANO PO 3
2ND WORST MOVIE OF 2004 AWARD - [illegible]
KAAS BLOOD AWARD - [illegible]
THE PINOY ELLEN DE GENERES AWARD - [illegible]
WHY DID I SIGN UP FOR THIS FILM AWARD - [illegible]
ANNOYING LOVE TEAM AWARD - [illegible]
MOST IMPROVED PLAYER - [illegible]
SPECIAL AWARD FOR NOT BEING BORING EVEN IF WE WATCHED IT A COUPLE OF TIMES - [illegible]

WE DARED SIT IN YOUR FILM AWARD - [illegible]
"WHEN MAKAPUNO ANG AH KO" AWARD - [illegible]
THE UNINTENTIONALLY FUNNY AWARD - [illegible]
LOS SOBRADOS SCHOOL OF ACTING AWARD - [illegible]
YOU HAVE TO BE BLIND AND DEAF TO LIKE THIS MOVIE AWARD - MANO PO 3
GRAHH EUPHORIA AWARD - [illegible]

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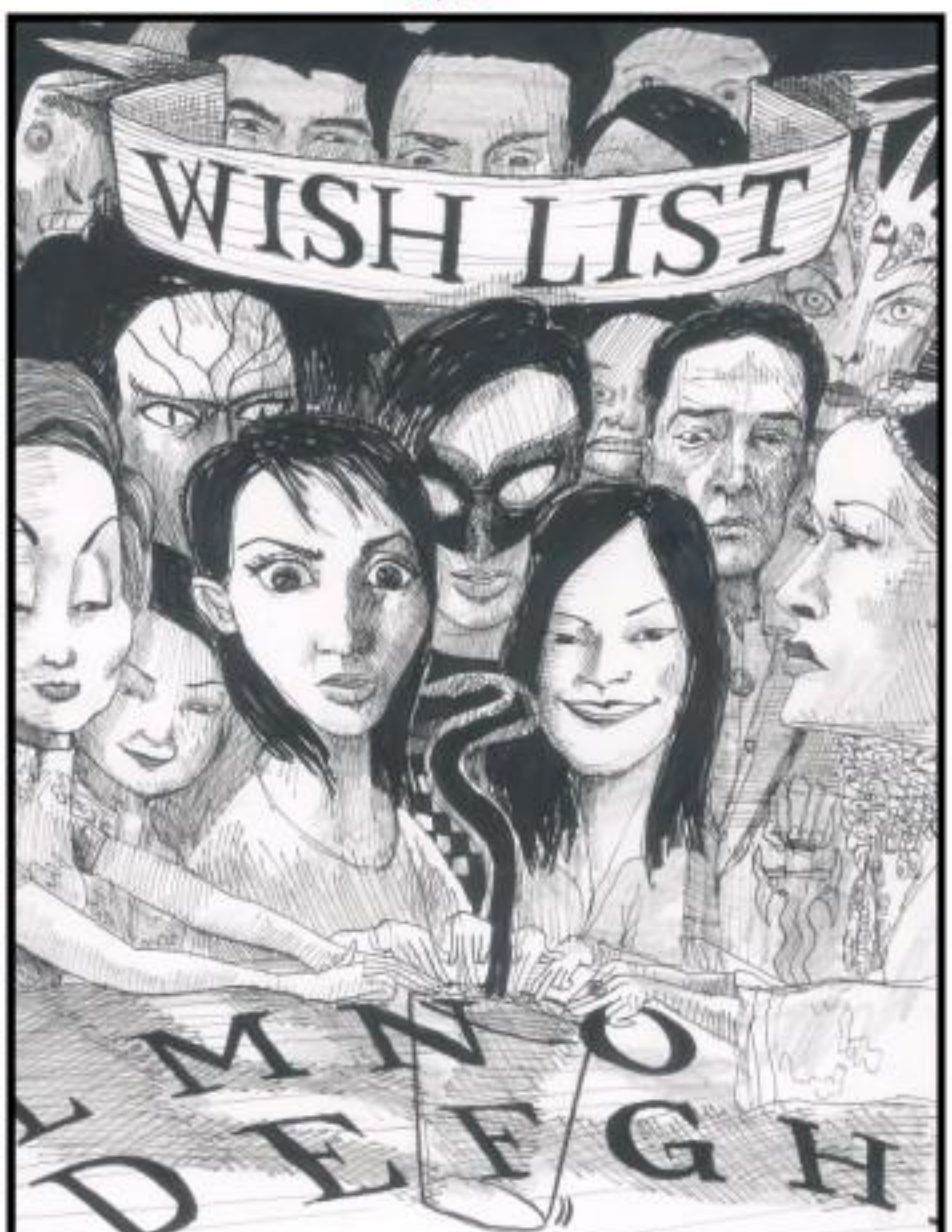


Cut! Cut! Cut!

Our industry can change so much in a few years—the answer is a new breed of creative minds

By Pepe Diokno and James Gozelle
Original Artwork by Jason Moss

RECENTLY, we had the Joel Lamangan-Mother Lily Film Festival, aptly called the MMFF. It was supposed to be the biggest film festival in the country, the venue for the best of the best films to compete—and we got Kris Aquino and Mano Po 3. Yeah, the Metro Manila Film Fest might have been the biggest festival in the country, but it wasn't the venue for the best of the best—it became the backdrop of a cinematic fiesta, with the producers as pimps and the actors, whores.

We felt dirty watching the previews, with the throngs of the V fans soaking in the spoon-fed the latest melodrama from the annals of unoriginality. We felt dirty because, with the MMFF, films ceased to be an art form—it became an industry, just an industry. During cricket was feeding this underground kiddie porn ring.

Walter Salzmann calls it the "McDonaldization" of cinema. He likened commercial movies to fast food offerings which are damaging and bad.

But here's another point of view: Bandwidthing a film is harder than it looks, and finding an audience is like climbing Everest. To do both, you have to have a story you've never will click, and you have to have people in it you know the masses want to watch. That is, if you're sane enough to want your money back.

This is the picture: The industry feeds the films what they want, they give in to demand, but leave out the growth part of development. The masses loves the old producers and shuns new projects that offer talent never seen before. The rich snubs with the discriminating taste may care less, but in any case, they can't fill a theater like the mass can.

You can't blame the groups and advisers because, with the situation our country's in now, it's what they have to do. You can't blame the mass either, because they're just looking for an escape—and they get that from typical Filipino movies. They won't find escape with "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," "Fahrenheit 9/11" or "Cinedie."

Then question might be, "Who do you blame, then?" But more to, "Is it proper to blame anyone in the first place?"

Is boycotting the MMFF the answer? No, because if the goal of that movement is to show there's something terribly wrong with the film that (and there is), there are other, more productive ways to do so—let's make another year-ly filmfest, a better one, without the dirt and grime of the MMFF (i.e. Cinemalaya)—even Cannes had to start somewhere.

Boycotting the filmfest is the typical Filipino reaction to any problem that comes up—we escape. Boy, just like the mass does). Boycotting is admitting there's nothing else we can do with the industry except boycott it.

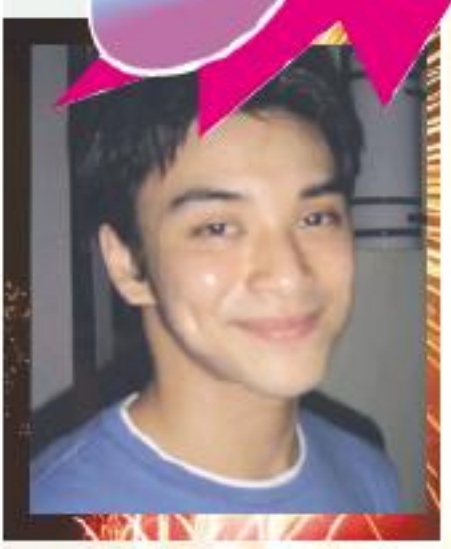
Our industry can change so much in a few years—that's if more people decide to join in. What's wrong with Filipino cinema is the people involved in it. But the answer to that is a new breed of creative minds—and it's great we're starting to see a lot of them.

There is a lot we can do with the industry. There is so much talent here. God had to break it up into an archipelago. We just have to see that.

E-mail the authors at superpope@gmail.com and jamesgozelle@gmail.com

2 Super

Text us your feedback: Inquirer sup name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph



Name: Dennis Briones
Occupation: Yero bar/restaurant owner, commercial model and network marketer
I'll begin this year with: A hefty meal, a cup of tea, and a positive outlook for 2005
My hope for this year will be: A better business and a Subaru Impreza WRX
My New Year's resolution is: Drink less, smoke less and spend less
E-mail me at: denzo_yero@yahoo.com

Name: Erica Abellana
Occupation: Shopaholic
I'll begin this year with: A big bang!
My hope for this year will be: Retaining my GWA in school or crank it up a notch higher
My New Year's resolution is: To try and enjoy single life for a change
E-mail me at: eea_5@hotmail.com

Superfriends

Text and photos by David Milan

Name: Katrina Sy
Occupation: YDG (Young Designer's Guild) probationary member
I'll begin this year with: A trip to Hong Kong for its Fashion Week!
My hope for this year will be: A better career and more money
My New Year's resolution is: To be more hardworking
E-mail me at: katrinaleesy@yahoo.com

Name: Timmy Escolin
Occupation: Student
I'll begin this year with: A San Mig Light
My hope for this year will be: A better one for my family and friends
My New Year's resolution is: To take things a little more seriously
E-mail me at: timmy_escolin@yahoo.com

Name: Aleli Cortes
Occupation: Multitasker!
I'll begin this year with: A big, big smile on my face
My hope for this year will be: A reconciliation with the person I've hurt...
My New Year's resolution is: Less partying and no more impulsive shopping
E-mail me at: alelicortes@yahoo.com

Name: Mikel Elizalde
Occupation: Student
I'll begin this year with: A big celebration and excitement
My hope for this year will be: A better one
My New Year's resolution is: To plant a tree!
E-mail me at: werharyu@yahoo.com

Name: Laurie Lee
Occupation: Graduate student/Advertising account executive
I'll begin this year with: Anticipation, hope, and a bottle of vodka at the beach!
My hope for this year will be: More joy and less pain
My New Year's resolution is: Explore all possibilities, discover all my potentials, and breathe in all experiences... thrice more than last year
E-mail me at: laur_sportsbuff@yahoo.com

Name: Paul Guasque
Occupation: Artist
I'll begin this year with: Prayers
My hope for this year will be: Full of new adventures
My New Year's resolution is: To be the best that I can be
E-mail me at: paulguasque@yahoo.com

Mano Po 3 - The First

caught by

Super

style . urban living . pop culture . entertainment . recreation

Jonni Epperson

Mabuhay? His stylish turn Just Mute creative director cum b-boi is making fashionistas settle with ben "Good Finds" to share on this Almighty Network. Okay, it's a show about shopping, but more than that, Jonni's strength comes from her wanting to empower viewers by giving them enough good bad the BEST finds.

Victor Basa

A liberal's accept and coming "it" way, it would have to be Victor Wagtime of rag, rockery scene shaker and designer Hayes Basa. He for has the right combination of physique and brains (has that will make any Zoolander wannabe enroll with Asiaman). He's also a photographer and an active scene player, which makes him even more interesting than any other new model from around the block.

25 to watch out for in 2005

By Tim Yap

EVERY year, people come and people go. These 25 names are Super's bets to Super! standout this coming year of the rooster. From DJs to models to directors and club owners—watch this new set of movers and shakers to crow, grow and glow this 2005.

Georgina Wilson

Angel Locsin

Mark Nicdao

25 to watch out for in 2005

Pury Quiñones

The guy responsible for this term-by-day styling of last year's Benetton "Go sensationnel" show and my crew for works designer. Take my word for it—this guy is FABULOUS good. He can whip up anything and everything from simple sophisticated looks with a twist to avant-garde creations that are make Tessa Prieto-Valdes' jaw drop. Need I say more?

Geoff Eigenmann

If you think being 6'4" was Asian-American dancers and MTV VJ is a whole lot of accomplishments, think gonna again. This count the icing on Geoff's cake as 2005 will prove to be a banner year for the young Eigenmann. Is he gonna be the male Heart Evangelista? Well, they are paired as a love team, aren't they?

Rocky Salumbides

Winning the MTV Pandesisha Best Model Search was a feat for this male model who is now the favorite of many avant-garde designers and fashion insiders alike. Most successful male models are the ones who look as if they are your neighbor next door. Other people think he's the Pinoy Tyson Beckford and we have nothing to

Erik Cua

The new ambassador of party with-holder turf annihilation—the biggest reason to negotiate this 2005. We're a fine-dining connoisseur! I research. Cua was my client partner Fernando Ana-carnival, an Embassy 24-hour cafe and an Embassy Suites® club (of which I am a partner, along with Ana-Maria, married Manila nightlife to near 'higher and higher, lifting me up...'

Rin Bolivar

She is the "it" model of the moment. "When Nino Ignacio first [illegible] she was the only model who could get [illegible] with my clothes because she knew how to fit me. She got it instantly. I think the reason models get addicted with my clothes is because nothing has ever been so comfy to fit in and running around in. She also represented the modesty in the Cine Modo world I love," says

Grissa Cadness

Bring it girl can move any man asleep with the wave of her hand. She sashays around a party and makes all heads turn, without her knowing it. Within no, the party just seems to be better. In note—I love saying her name. It just rolls down your tongue so invitingly. Sexiest entrance? Yes. Okay, you may stand down.

Kat Alano

Not your "your ordinary girl," Kat Alano was born bad via the Disco 90s. Made stories with Miss Manila Bulletin Calendar girl-to-the Tom Cruise-rescue take appears on our screen and is now the new Studio 23 VJ to change of hitting on what happened in Charmed, Dark Angel, Oprah and Smallville. We'll definitely stay tuned with this charmer.

Dennis Trillo

A new, young, serious actor to always welcome in the industry. His "robot" scene can stay" personality works well for him, as his audition finds him mysterious. During last year's Wowbod, he starred in both "Wazzup Pa 2" (where he made his eyes dreamy) and in "Kabisilyadasz" (where he roared "everything" to look like a girl). How's that for taking the part seriously?

Japay Lizardo

Cool story he came our to my telecom ads, gets here been going per gov over the bay's screen. He's also a fashionista because as don't mess with his gas because he can kick some serious butt

Mars Miranda

To say that Ms.G1 rocks is an understatement. The past year saw him packing the clubs with his eclectic mix of music that spans genre-nations from Michael Jackson and Britney Spears (we'll cool when G1 Mars puts them on his tracks. This DJ-turned-host is make the crowd go gaga

Henry Lim

He is the presidential Government Singer, he didn't replace GMA, but he might as well should, unbearable virginity, grimaces to over the point pose and to make happy people happen through his dance club locations here like legendary Orange and Olive used to be. He Government spells A-C-T-I-O-N!

Winward Chu

Yolanda and Israel—two of Pinoy's favorite pastimes. Winward is the newest pinoy talkies! Red Box and Street Talk both of whom are always packed lines are a common sight. Yes, Ohhh, I think he plans to even expand his empire. More Red Box and Street Talk!? Who can complain about that?

Xander Angeles

I'm not talking about Xander's achievements as a photographer, that up to this point, portray the clean-cut-but-tattooed woman to cute-but-tattooed, romance unparalleled. I'm talking about Xander Angeles, the commercial director since he just got back from New York to pursue. As more he directing, I see shooting hotels to completing on on the beach, babe—what will Xander think of next?

John Joe Joseph

When people first saw the guy in [illegible] they were intrigued. Who belongs he was. Then came a group of times among the new batch of MTV VJs, he has established the most attention to his "good-boy-with-some-bad-ticks—go-his-client" look. Let's see if JJJ will make a mark like his MTV predecessors Mon Abaya and KC Montero. I have a funny feeling he'll make it. Agree?

Bianca Zabel

These days, it's all about the after party. Who cares if you're not invited to the main event? That's boring and full of adults anyway. Overnight as we were looking for what-to-wear pants, we were surprised to find that there was some "good hostess, we know where all of his/her parents.) The "mission" then is C'is leaving for Boracay in two hours, so early bird, she is to be asked to go home. Now WHY is she in Boracay? Is it because Rod Ramos? Is she official queen of the young night scene? And hey, she also works for her family's company, so she's not unlucky—she works hard, too.

Paolo Martel

Yes, he does play bar tables and pose to bottles of champagne every night. But more than the party boy that we see splattered across Cosmo-bar another fun, Paolo Martel is a publicist by day, managing the pages of 13 Magazine, hush-hush tower, and the events he launched focus-driven hospitality magazine. Just like Bianca Z, he's also 25.

Kelly Misa

If you think you've seen her before, that's because you surely have—she has done countless ads here, and now, she's conquering Asia with stints all over the region. She's really a travel girl, too—when not touring home to mom and all your buddies, and she at once where they see her in your arena.

MTV Supahstar winners

They went through a really talent search and survived—without the chance. Now signed under Warner Music, a company hell bent on pushing OPM back on the musical track—Super Winners they are the musical group to watch out for. A mix of pop, rap, rock and vocal styles. Let's groove, baby!

Melvin Mapua

His staging and direction of last year's event talked about Generosity show remains a feat that is waiting for a follow-up. Industry insiders like Rod Stefani has told it takes to make it. With his background in styling, communicating and designing, he truly understands the inner workings of fashion and the way it evolves. Rumor has it that he's not planning to push through with his directing fashion shows. We hope not.

Emily Foster

Her MP Academy just had their debut event at The Republic a couple of months back, and wow it became event! Guesting the crowd that had gathered gave it rave reviews. Being Enrique Gil's ex-girlfriend has done the trick for her career knowledge and coming power for UK Cola—Miguel Pelayo being the first guy she brought to Dubai! more DP follow coming to town to have up our camera party. Quick because of this girl!